# \*\*\*Cuba Neg\*\*\*

## A2 Democracy Adv

### 1NC Frontline

#### 1. The plan is a unilateral concession- destroys bargaining chip to extract democratic reform

JAIME SUCHLICKI [one of the world’s foremost scholars on Latin America, is a professor of history at the School of International Studies at the University of Miami. He edits the Journal of Inter-American and World Affairs, consults for the U.S. government, and is the author of Mexico: From Montezuma to the Fall of the PRI and University Students and Revolution in Cuba] April 4, 2013¶ [DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONS](http://devresearchcenter.org/)¶ A BLOG SPONSORED BY THE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER¶ What if…the U.S. Ended the Cuba Travel Ban and the Embargo? by Jaime Suchlicki¶ <http://devresearchcenter.org/2013/04/12/what-if-the-u-s-ended-the-cuba-travel-ban-and-the-embargo/#more-219>

Conclusions¶ If the travel ban is lifted unilaterally now or the embargo is ended by the U.S., what will the U.S. government have to negotiate with a future regime in Cuba and to encourage changes in the island? These policies could be an important bargaining chip with a future regime willing to provide concessions in the area of political and economic freedoms.¶ The travel ban and the embargo should be lifted as a result of negotiations between the U.S. and a Cuban government willing to provide meaningful and irreversible political and economic concessions or when there is a democratic government in place in the island.

#### 2. Plan increases regime control - Unconditional removal of the embargo floods the regime with new money causing them to roll back political freedom- turns democracy efforts

JORGE A. SANGUINETTY [Dr. Sanguinetty is an expert on the political economy of policy reform in developing and transitional economies. As a former economic planner in Cuba, Dr. Sanguinetty has first-hand knowledge of centrally planned economies and how they can transition to more open, market-based systems. He has worked on projects in more than 20 countries]¶ April 8, 2013¶ [DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONS](http://devresearchcenter.org/)¶ A BLOG SPONSORED BY THE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER¶ Who benefits and loses if the US-Cuba embargo is lifted? by Jorge A. Sanguinetty¶ <http://devresearchcenter.org/2013/04/08/who-benefits-and-loses-if-the-us-cuba-embargo-is-lifted-by-jorge-a-sanguinetty/>

Nonetheless, the system might have reached a point of equilibrium under which an unconditional lifting of the US embargo might still accrue enough economic benefit to the Cuban government that it leads to a roll back of some recent reforms in order to cut loses in the political, albeit informal, arena. This will be a strong reason to oppose an unconditional lifting on the embargo for those who care about the wishes for freedom and welfare of the Cuban people. Many international observers oppose the US embargo on the basis of several debatable assumptions. One is the belief that the embargo has served the Castro government as an excuse for its economic failures, and once lifted the excuse will disappear. Another assumption is that Cubans don´t know that the embargo might have constrained their economy, but not as much as the restrictions of virtually all economic activity by the Cuban government. There are also many Cubans that believe that the US embargo is the only leverage left to pressure the Cuban government to lift internal restrictions in both the economic and the political fronts. It is doubtful that, under the current conditions, a non-negotiated lifting of the US embargo is likely to bring about democracy in Cuba.

#### 3. No Solvency - Lifting the embargo won’t solve elections or democracy

[DAMIEN CAVE](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/damien_cave/index.html) [foreign correspondent for The New York Times, he covers Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.¶ From 2008 to 2010 he served as the Times’ Miami bureau chief, writing on a range of topics] ¶ November 19, 2012¶ Easing of Restraints in Cuba Renews Debate on U.S. Embargo¶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/20/world/americas/changes-in-cuba-create-support-for-easing-embargo.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0>

“Maintaining this embargo, maintaining this hostility, all it does is strengthen and embolden the hard-liners,” said Carlos Saladrigas, a Cuban exile and co-chairman of the[Cuba Study Group](http://www.cubastudygroup.org/) in Washington, which advocates engagement with Cuba. “What we should be doing is helping the reformers.” Any easing would be a gamble. Free enterprise may not necessarily lead to the embargo’s goal of free elections, especially because Cuba has said it wants to replicate the paths of Vietnam and China, where the loosening of economic restrictions has not led to political change. Indeed, Cuban officials have become adept at using previous American efforts to soften the embargo to their advantage, taking a cut of dollars converted into pesos and marking up the prices at state-owned stores.

#### 4. No Impact - Empirics are on our side- extinction won’t occur

Don Maier 2009 – Env Scholar @ U of St Francis, Don, “What’s So Good About Biodiversity?”, Paper presented to the 6th Annual Joint International Society for Environmental Philosophy/ISEE Conferencehttp://www.environmentalphilosophy.org/ISEEIAEPpapers/2009/Maier.pdf

One might insist that the concern for biodiversity should be restricted even further – to the sustaining of life (just) as we know it right now in the early 21st century. But with this additional restriction, we have finally reached a confluence with the just-so model of biodiversity value and its attendant problems – discussed in Section 4.1.4 on "The just-so model". Yet another reworking of Noss' statement would place a different restriction on biodiversity – as that which sustains human life. But an historical perspective shows that none of the transformational changes in the kinds that are diverse, as well as changes in the diversity itself – have prevented humanity from emerging from a bottleneck population of perhaps 10,000 (or fewer) individuals some 60,000 – 70,000 years ago, to grow to its current population size, now nearing 7 billion, and become the world's apex species to boot. That is not just "sustaining human life". It is a spectacular flourishing of a species by any purely biological standard. To give it some degree of plausibility, I can only interpret this last reworking of Noss' statement as way to reinterpret the threshold model of biodiversity value. That is, at some point not yet in the experience of H. sapiens, with enough change (most likely reduction) in biodiversity, human life will not be possible – even though almost certainly other life forms will still flourish. The question then becomes, where is the threshold? Although megafauna have undoubtedly suffered globally at human hands, H. sapiens clearly has not suffered as a biological species on account of that. Moreover, we still stand at something near an all-time earth history high point in species diversity – indeed, at an all-time high for diversity considered at pretty much every taxonomic level. 147 Also, we know that some species – particularly the most adaptable generalists such as H. sapiens – have often survived dramatic extinction events and squeezed through the narrowest of population bottlenecks. As a result, the most straightforward inductions argue against any immediate danger to the continuation of human life.

### 1NC 1 Ext – Bargain Chip Key

#### Lack of transparency means embargo is key to bargaining chip

**Vidal 2013** (William Vidal, 2-26-13, “What if the US Ended the Cuba Travel Ban and the Embargo”, <http://ontwoshores.com/?p=1785>)

Cuba does not have an independent/transparent legal system. All judges are appointed by the State and all lawyers are licensed by the State. In the last few years, European investors have had over $1 billion arbitrarily frozen by the government and several investments have been confiscated. Cuba’s Law 77 allows the State to expropriate foreign-invested assets for reason of “public utility” or “social interest.” In the last year, the CEOs of three companies with extensive dealings with the Cuban government were arrested without charges. OTS: Again, U.S. companies can look out for their interests… well, you get the gist, even if Suchlicki doesn’t. Conclusions - If the travel ban is lifted unilaterally now or the embargo is ended by the U.S., what will the U.S. government have to negotiate with a future regime in Cuba and to encourage changes in the island? These policies could be an important bargaining chip with a future regime willing to provide concessions in the area of political and economic freedoms.

### 1NC 2 Ext – Increases Regime Crackdowns

#### Removing sanctions funds hardliners iron grip over the peoples

**Cuba Standard 2012** (6-25-12, “Cuban American Corporate Execs Urge to Stay Hardline”, <http://www.cubastandard.com/2012/06/25/cuban-american-corporate-execs-urge-to-stay-hardline/>)

Calling Cuba’s economic reforms “cosmetic,” 15 mostly Cuban American corporate executives urged the United States to maintain a hard line against the Cuban government. In their letter, titled “commitment to freedom” and datelined Washington, the signers reject any business ties with Cuba. “We … wish to convey our great concern regarding the Castro regime’s deceptive campaign aimed at securing much-needed financial resources to prolong its iron grip over the people of Cuba,” the document says. Reconciliation efforts with Cuban émigrés by the Cuban government and Catholic Church are a “smokescreen,” the signees contend.

### 1NC 3 Ext – No Solvency

#### Exposure and liberalization won’t work- empirically disprove

[AJ Delgado](http://www.mediaite.com/author/aj-delgado/) [Cuban American columnist, author, Harvard Law graduate]¶ April 13th, 2013¶ Bill Maher Ignorantly Rants Against The Cuban Embargo, Adding Himself To The List Of Useful Idiots¶ <http://www.mediaite.com/tv/bill-maher-ignorantly-rants-against-the-cuban-embargo-adding-himself-to-the-list-of-useful-idiots/>

Friday night’s Real Time With Bill Maher, Bill Maher and guests noted the [controversy](http://www.mediaite.com/online/useful-idiots-beyonce-and-jay-z-ignore-cubas-racism-with-havana-trip/) over [Jay-Z](http://rd.bizrate.com/rd?t=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lilydirect.com%2F9-IX-Rocawear-Perfume-by-Jay-Z--34-oz-EDT-Spray-Tester_p_4773.html%3Fgdftrk%3DgdfV25891_a_7c2352_a_7c8975_a_7cJZ9IXR34EDTMTCL&mid=267118&cat_id=88&atom=10001&prod_id=&oid=4691011896&pos=1&b_id=18&bid_type=0&bamt=0238e138690aac2c&cobrand=1&rf=af1&af_assettype_id=10&af_creative_id=6&af_id=6784) and Beyonce’s recent trip to Cuba, prompting a discussion about the U.S. embargo towards the island. Maher, as he has done previously, criticized the policy, calling it, aside from the drug war, “the stupidest policy we have.”¶ Curiously, but not surprisingly, out of the Maher’s four guests, not a single Cuban exile or Cuban-American was among them to discuss the issue. That would actually present a credible point of view on the subject, something Maher apparently will not suffer.¶ Instead, we were subjected to a ‘not-exactly-expert’ panel’s opinion, including Bob Costas, asports broadcaster, noting: “The more Cubans are exposed to Americans and their lifestyle and their point of view… eventually this is gonna collapse of its own weight.”¶ Ah, the tired, naïve ‘exposure’ argument that, if only Americans could freely travel to Cuba in droves, Cubans would see how marvelous and wonderful we are, overthrow their overlords, and democracy would flourish. Costas fails to ponder, however, why it is the constant tourism from Canada and other Western, democratic nations has failed to have this effect. Moreover, Cubans already have a massive amount of exposure to Americans (Cuban-Americans travel frequently to visit immediate family members). They’re well aware of how great America is – it’s precisely why some brave Cubans (risking execution if caught) escape, even swimming in shark-infested waters to reach our shores. (Sidenote: Why does the fact that Cuba is essentially one large island-prison, one of the few nations which physically restricts its citizens from traveling abroad, much less from permanently emigrating, always omitted from any conversation?)

### 1NC 4 Ext – Impact Defense

#### Democracies can still destroy the environment- US actions in Iraq prove

Mikael Thalen [writer, political analyst, historian, and blogger]¶ DEMOCRACY: US Destruction Of Iraq Environment Worse Than Hiroshima¶ April 9, 2013¶ <http://www.secretsofthefed.com/democracy-us-destruction-of-iraq-environment-worse-than-hiroshima/>

[T]en years ago, invading American troops and their allies deliberately tested all sorts of weapons, contaminating Iraqi the environment for hundreds of years to come and reducing citizens’ life expectancies to 30 years, an Iraqi doctor told RT.¶ Over the ten years of occupation, Iraqi citizens have been developing alarmingly growing numbers of medical conditions, the Iraqi cardiologist, Dr. Omar al-Kubaisi, told RT’s Arabic-language sister channel Rusiya Al-Yaum.¶ RT: What is the nature of these conditions?¶ Dr. Omar al-Kubaisi: I’d like to start by saying thanks to the Rusiya Al Yaum TV channel for this opportunity. I would like to talk first about the general health status and then I’ll address your question about the medical conditions. The United States claimed to have been helping Iraq restore the country in all areas, such as education, through investments, but in fact the only real “help” that came from the US was their deployment of the weapons prohibited by the Geneva [Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques] on Iraqi soil.¶ This convention forbids the use of any weapons capable of changing the environment at the site of war including making changes to climate and water sources, which will affect the entire ecosystem. The events of 1991 and 2003 were nothing but catastrophic. They have deployed all sorts of weapons you could think of: cluster, white phosphorus, depleted uranium munitions, toxic gases and poisonous substances, in other words chemical weapons. All these types of weapons were used deliberately and massively. They were test-tried in Iraq and caused an environmental catastrophe worse than that of Hiroshima.¶ ¶ RT: Isn’t it an overstatement?¶ OK: Not in the slightest. This is not just my opinion. You can look it up on the Internet in the reports of the Human Rights Watch and the World Health Organization. Internationally acclaimed scientists have measured the levels of radiation which were found to be indicative of radiological contamination of Iraq’s southern, central and even some northern territories. And despite all the calls for attention and help published by the Iraqi scientists – and I’d like to note that we have internationally recognized nuclear physicists and biologists in Iraq – despite all their effort no one, neither chemists, nor physicists, nor healthcare officials, nor the United States paid any attention.¶ Whereas these publications mentioned such things as a widespread environmental contamination resulting in a growing number of congenital deformities, miscarriages, all kinds of cancer cases, and increased levels of radiation throughout Iraq. And it wouldn’t be so bad if it were only about the US. The worst thing is that Maliki’s government and all occupation governments have been the first to crack down on those who speak about the chemical and radiological contamination.

#### The plan destroys the environment- creates an opening for oil companies to offshore drill in Cuba and exploit the environment

Mauricio Claver-Carone [Executive Director of Cuba Democracy Advocates in Washington, D.C., a non-partisan organization dedicated to the promotion of a transition in Cuba towards human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In an independent capacity, Mauricio serves on the Board of Directors of the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC, the largest, single foreign-policy political committee in the United States]¶ July 25, 2008¶ How the Cuban embargo protects the environment¶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/25/opinion/25iht-edcarone.1.14793496.html>

The answer is simple: If the Chinese were to start drilling in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Cuba - so very close to the coast of Florida - it would send a "red scare" through the halls of the U.S. Congress, creating a new and otherwise improbable coalition for unilaterally lifting the current embargo. Longtime advocates of lifting trade sanctions against Cuba would join with conservative Republicans, who, though they now support the trade embargo, are strong advocates for allowing U.S. companies to drill offshore, and with liberal environmentalists who would rather have strictly regulated U.S. companies drilling than unregulated Chinese companies. In Cuba that looks like a winning trifecta for changing U.S. policy.¶ As early as 2006, the Reuters news bureau in Cuba was reporting: "Havana is eager to see American oil companies join forces with the anti-embargo lobby led by U.S. farmers who have been selling food to Cuba for four years."¶ In recent weeks this strategy has taken center stage in Washington with political and public opinion leaders openly discussing the irony of "the Chinese drilling 60 miles from Florida's coast," while U.S. law prevents American companies from doing the same along the outer continental shelf.¶ The premise of the argument, however, is just not true. Chinese companies are not drilling in Cuba's offshore waters. Nor do the Chinese have any lease agreements with Cuba's state-owned oil company, Cupet, to do so. As a matter of fact, the last drilling for oil off Cuba's coast took place in 2004 and was led by the Spanish-Argentine consortium Repsol YPF. It found oil but not in any commercially viable quantity. Inactivity since suggests that Repsol YPF is not eager to follow up with the required investment in Castro's Cupet.¶ For almost a decade now, the Castro regime has been lauding offshore lease agreements. It has tried Norway's StatoilHydro, India's state-run Oil & Natural Gas Corporation, Malaysia's Petronas and Canada's Sherritt International. Yet, there is no current drilling activity off Cuba's coasts. The Cuban government has announced plans to drill, then followed with postponements in 2006, 2007 and this year.¶ Clearly, foreign oil companies anticipate political changes in Cuba and are trying to position themselves accordingly. It is equally clear they are encountering legal and logistical obstacles preventing oil and gas exploration and development. Among the impediments are well-founded reservations as to how any new discovery can be turned into product. Cuba has very limited refining capacity, and the U.S. embargo prevents sending Cuban crude oil to American refineries. Neither is it financially or logistically viable for partners of the current Cuban regime to undertake deep-water exploration without access to U.S. technology, which the embargo prohibits transferring to Cuba. The prohibitions exist for good reason. Fidel Castro expropriated U.S. oil company assets after taking control of Cuba and has never provided compensation.¶ Equally important, foreign companies trying to do business with Cuba still face a lot of expenses and political risks. If, or when, the Cuban regime decides again to expropriate the assets of these companies, there is no legal recourse in Cuba.¶ Frankly, it is bewildering why some seem to believe that U.S. companies partnering with one more anti-American dictatorship to explore and develop oil fields will somehow reduce fuel costs for American consumers and contribute to U.S. energy independence. One needs only to look at the reaction of the international oil markets when Hugo Chávez of Venezuela nationalized assets of U.S.-based ConocoPhillips and Chevron.¶ What message would the United States be sending to oil-rich, tyrannical regimes around the world about the consequences of expropriation if we were now to lift the embargo that was imposed after Fidel Castro expropriated the assets of Esso, Shell and Texaco?¶ For many years the U.S. embargo has served to protect America's national security interests; today it is also serving to prevent Cuba's regime from drilling near U.S. shores. And that's good for the environment.

### A2 “Contact With Americans Solves”

#### The plan wouldn’t facilitate democracy- contact with Americans through tourism is limited and lifting the embargo would empower the Castros further

JAIME SUCHLICKI [one of the world’s foremost scholars on Latin America, is a professor of history at the School of International Studies at the University of Miami. He edits the Journal of Inter-American and World Affairs, consults for the U.S. government, and is the author of Mexico: From Montezuma to the Fall of the PRI and University Students and Revolution in Cuba] April 4, 2013¶ [DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONS](http://devresearchcenter.org/)¶ A BLOG SPONSORED BY THE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER¶ What if…the U.S. Ended the Cuba Travel Ban and the Embargo? by Jaime Suchlicki¶ <http://devresearchcenter.org/2013/04/12/what-if-the-u-s-ended-the-cuba-travel-ban-and-the-embargo/#more-219>

Ending the embargo and lifting the ban for U.S. tourists to travel to Cuba would be a major concession totally out of proportion to recent changes in the island. If the U.S. were to lift the travel ban without major reforms in Cuba, there would be significant implications:¶ Money from American tourists would flow into businesses owned by the Castro government thus strengthening state enterprises. The tourist industry is controlled by the military and General Raul Castro, Fidel’s brother.¶ American tourists will have limited contact with Cubans. Most Cuban resorts are built in isolated areas, are off limits to the average Cuban, and are controlled by Cuba’s efficient security apparatus. Most Americans don’t speak Spanish, have but limited contact with ordinary Cubans, and are not interested in visiting the island to subvert its regime. Law 88 enacted in 1999 prohibits Cubans from receiving publications from tourists. Penalties include jail terms. While providing the Castro government with much needed dollars, the economic impact of tourism on the Cuban population would be limited. Dollars will trickle down to the Cuban poor in only small quantities, while state and foreign enterprises will benefit most.¶ Tourist dollars would be spent on products, i.e., rum, tobacco, etc., produced by state enterprises, and tourists would stay in hotels owned partially or wholly by the Cuban government. The principal airline shuffling tourists around the island, Gaviota, is owned and operated by the Cuban military.¶ Over the past decades hundred of thousands of Canadian, European and Latin American tourists have visited the island. Cuba is not more democratic today. If anything, Cuba is more totalitarian, with the state and its control apparatus having been strengthened as a result of the influx of tourist dollars.¶

## A2 Cuban Economy Adv

### 1NC Frontline

#### 1. Investments in Cuba won’t solve the economy

JAIME SUCHLICKI [one of the world’s foremost scholars on Latin America, is a professor of history at the School of International Studies at the University of Miami. He edits the Journal of Inter-American and World Affairs, consults for the U.S. government, and is the author of Mexico: From Montezuma to the Fall of the PRI and University Students and Revolution in Cuba] April 4, 2013¶ [DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONS](http://devresearchcenter.org/)¶ A BLOG SPONSORED BY THE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER¶ What if…the U.S. Ended the Cuba Travel Ban and the Embargo? by Jaime Suchlicki¶ <http://devresearchcenter.org/2013/04/12/what-if-the-u-s-ended-the-cuba-travel-ban-and-the-embargo/#more-219>

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#### 2. Tourism can’t solve the economy- limited gains

JAIME SUCHLICKI [one of the world’s foremost scholars on Latin America, is a professor of history at the School of International Studies at the University of Miami. He edits the Journal of Inter-American and World Affairs, consults for the U.S. government, and is the author of Mexico: From Montezuma to the Fall of the PRI and University Students and Revolution in Cuba] April 4, 2013¶ [DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONS](http://devresearchcenter.org/)¶ A BLOG SPONSORED BY THE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER¶ What if…the U.S. Ended the Cuba Travel Ban and the Embargo? by Jaime Suchlicki¶ <http://devresearchcenter.org/2013/04/12/what-if-the-u-s-ended-the-cuba-travel-ban-and-the-embargo/#more-219>

Ending the embargo and lifting the ban for U.S. tourists to travel to Cuba would be a major concession totally out of proportion to recent changes in the island. If the U.S. were to lift the travel ban without major reforms in Cuba, there would be significant implications: Money from American tourists would flow into businesses owned by the Castro government thus strengthening state enterprises. The tourist industry is controlled by the military and General Raul Castro, Fidel’s brother. American tourists will have limited contact with Cubans. Most Cuban resorts are built in isolated areas, are off limits to the average Cuban, and are controlled by Cuba’s efficient security apparatus. Most Americans don’t speak Spanish, have but limited contact with ordinary Cubans, and are not interested in visiting the island to subvert its regime. Law 88 enacted in 1999 prohibits Cubans from receiving publications from tourists. Penalties include jail terms. While providing the Castro government with much needed dollars, the economic impact of tourism on the Cuban population would be limited. Dollars will trickle down to the Cuban poor in only small quantities, while state and foreign enterprises will benefit most. Tourist dollars would be spent on products, i.e., rum, tobacco, etc., produced by state enterprises, and tourists would stay in hotels owned partially or wholly by the Cuban government. The principal airline shuffling tourists around the island, Gaviota, is owned and operated by the Cuban military. Over the past decades hundred of thousands of Canadian, European and Latin American tourists have visited the island. Cuba is not more democratic today. If anything, Cuba is more totalitarian, with the state and its control apparatus having been strengthened as a result of the influx of tourist dollars. A large influx of American tourists into Cuba would have a dislocating effect on the economies of smaller Caribbean islands such as Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and even Florida, highly dependent on tourism for their well-being. Careful planning must take place, lest we create significant hardships and social problems in these countries. If the embargo is lifted, limited trade with, and investments in Cuba would develop. Yet there are significant implications.

#### 3. Alt Cause - Plan can’t solve economy

[AJ Delgado](http://www.mediaite.com/author/aj-delgado/) [Cuban American columnist, author, Harvard Law graduate]¶ April 13th, 2013¶ Bill Maher Ignorantly Rants Against The Cuban Embargo, Adding Himself To The List Of Useful Idiots¶ <http://www.mediaite.com/tv/bill-maher-ignorantly-rants-against-the-cuban-embargo-adding-himself-to-the-list-of-useful-idiots/>

Mention China, and you’ll soon here another embargo-opponent or simpleton (I know, I repeat myself) argument: “Look how capitalism is crushing Communism in China! It would have the same effect in Cuba!” I would advise proponents of this particular argument to back away slowly so as to preserve any future pretense of being somewhat well-read. Here’s why: even the most cursory overview of Chinese policy denotes a strong contrast with Cuba: unlike the Cuban regime, the Chinese government tolerates and even encourages a booming, entrepreneurial domestic market. That is why China has been able to thrive, while Cuba has not. An American embargo has nothing to do with Cuba’s economic failures — the regime’s own Soviet-style policies have destroyed its economy and even decades of trading with a myriad of nations has not solved its problems.

#### 4. No Impact - Economic collapse is inevitable, the plan can’t overcome structural issues in the US marketplace

James Wood [a retired Country Manager for Citibank in three Latin American countries. At 71, James is devoted to analyzing markets and where our economy is going]¶ Jun 12 2012¶ <http://seekingalpha.com/article/652661-the-unavoidable-u-s-reality-the-upcoming-economic-collapse>

The US, and much of the world, faces an unavoidable reality. There must be a severe economic collapse before we can proceed with the next period of sustained economic growth. This scenario is based on fundamental economic theory and a long history of what happens when the current economic conditions persist and are worsening. This reality is of utmost importance to any investor except one with a very short-term investment horizon.¶ This unavoidable reality is clearly demonstrated by the fundamentally opposing policies of the American right and left. The right, represented by the Tea Party, has both the clearest policies and the least supportable views in terms of economic theory and the real history of the world. The Tea Party's economic plan is to lower taxes, primarily to the richest. To balance the budget, it plans to cut benefits, primarily to those most in need. This strategy will do severe damage to the pretense of a social safety network. A fundamental reason for cutting taxes to the rich is that they will invest and thereby enrich the whole community.¶ The Tea Party plan fails based on three critical parameters:¶ Classic economic theory.¶ Historical fact in similar circumstances.¶ Common sense.¶ First, let´s discuss classical economic theory. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is the measure of how an economy is doing. GDP is the measure of our total annual income. When GDP goes up, people naturally tend to invest. When it goes down, people naturally tend not to invest. GDP is the sum of all spending by the people (the private sector) plus all the spending of the government (government sector) plus net exports (the net balance between exports and imports). If exports are greater than imports, the net balance adds to the GDP. If imports exceed exports, the net balance decreases the GDP.

### 1NC 1 Ext – Investments Fail

#### Calls for investment are a rouse – government cares more about control than economic growth

[DAMIEN CAVE](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/damien_cave/index.html) [foreign correspondent for The New York Times, he covers Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.¶ From 2008 to 2010 he served as the Times’ Miami bureau chief, writing on a range of topics] ¶ November 19, 2012¶ Easing of Restraints in Cuba Renews Debate on U.S. Embargo¶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/20/world/americas/changes-in-cuba-create-support-for-easing-embargo.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0>

“The sanctions on the regime must remain in place and, in fact, should be strengthened, and not be altered,” she wrote in an e-mail. “Responsible nations must not buy into the facade the dictatorship is trying to create by announcing ‘reforms’ while, in reality, it’s tightening its grip on its people.” Many Cubans agree that their government cares more about control than economic growth. Business owners complain that inspectors pounce when they see signs of success and demand receipts to prove that supplies were not stolen from the government, a common practice here. One restaurant owner in Havana said he received a large fine for failing to produce a receipt for plastic wrap.

### 1NC 2 Ext – No Solvency

#### A trade relationship won’t spark economic gains

JAIME SUCHLICKI [one of the world’s foremost scholars on Latin America, is a professor of history at the School of International Studies at the University of Miami. He edits the Journal of Inter-American and World Affairs, consults for the U.S. government, and is the author of Mexico: From Montezuma to the Fall of the PRI and University Students and Revolution in Cuba] April 4, 2013¶ [DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONS](http://devresearchcenter.org/)¶ A BLOG SPONSORED BY THE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER¶ What if…the U.S. Ended the Cuba Travel Ban and the Embargo? by Jaime Suchlicki¶ <http://devresearchcenter.org/2013/04/12/what-if-the-u-s-ended-the-cuba-travel-ban-and-the-embargo/#more-219>

Ending the embargo and lifting the ban for U.S. tourists to travel to Cuba would be a major concession totally out of proportion to recent changes in the island. If the U.S. were to lift the travel ban without major reforms in Cuba, there would be significant implications:¶ Money from American tourists would flow into businesses owned by the Castro government thus strengthening state enterprises. The tourist industry is controlled by the military and General Raul Castro, Fidel’s brother.¶ American tourists will have limited contact with Cubans. Most Cuban resorts are built in isolated areas, are off limits to the average Cuban, and are controlled by Cuba’s efficient security apparatus. Most Americans don’t speak Spanish, have but limited contact with ordinary Cubans, and are not interested in visiting the island to subvert its regime. Law 88 enacted in 1999 prohibits Cubans from receiving publications from tourists. Penalties include jail terms.¶ While providing the Castro government with much needed dollars, the economic impact of tourism on the Cuban population would be limited. Dollars will trickle down to the Cuban poor in only small quantities, while state and foreign enterprises will benefit most.¶ Tourist dollars would be spent on products, i.e., rum, tobacco, etc., produced by state enterprises, and tourists would stay in hotels owned partially or wholly by the Cuban government. The principal airline shuffling tourists around the island, Gaviota, is owned and operated by the Cuban military.¶ Over the past decades hundred of thousands of Canadian, European and Latin American tourists have visited the island. Cuba is not more democratic today. If anything, Cuba is more totalitarian, with the state and its control apparatus having been strengthened as a result of the influx of tourist dollars.¶ A large influx of American tourists into Cuba would have a dislocating effect on the economies of smaller Caribbean islands such as Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and even Florida, highly dependent on tourism for their well-being. Careful planning must take place, lest we create significant hardships and social problems in these countries.¶ If the embargo is lifted, limited trade with, and investments in Cuba would develop. Yet there are significant implications.¶ Trade¶ All trade with Cuba is done with state owned businesses. Since Cuba has very little credit and is a major debtor nation, the U.S. and its businesses would have to provide credits to Cuban enterprises. There is a long history of Cuba defaulting on loans.¶ Cuba is not likely to buy a substantial amount of products in the U.S. Cuba can buy in any other country and it is not likely to abandon its relationship with China, Russia, Venezuela, and Iran to become a major trading partner of the U.S.¶ Cuba has very little to sell in the U.S.

### 1NC 3 Ext – Alt Causes

#### Capitalist measures in Cuba Fail – Cuban politics

LN 5-31-13 (LiberationNews, No Author, “Cuba: Environmentally sustainable development is possible”, <http://www.pslweb.org/liberationnews/newspaper/vol-7-no-7/cuba-environmentally-sustainable-development-is-possible.html>)

Cuba’s 1976 Constitution established national sovereignty over the environment and the natural resources of the country. The National Commission for the Protection of the Environment was created that same year and protections for the environment have only grown. The economic crisis of the 1990s, caused by the destruction of the socialist camp and the tightening of the economic blockade imposed by the United States, led the government to search for new forms of land use and natural resources, the incorporation of environmentally friendly technology in rural agriculture and urban agricultural gardens, and better organization of agricultural cooperatives and land tenure. The use of many chemical pesticides was eliminated. All countries, including the United States, engage in environmental discourse, but economies based on capitalism cannot achieve sustainable development. Economies based on socialism can.

### 1NC 4 Ext – Impact Defense

#### Plan can’t overcome obstacles in US economy

Kevin Wixson [writing for Survival magazine] 24 March 2013¶ [Economic Collapse is it Inevitable?](http://survivalist.com/economic-collapse-is-it-inevitable/)¶ ¶ <http://survivalist.com/economic-collapse-is-it-inevitable/>

When it comes to discussing the topics people these days are “prepping” for we encounter a multitude of reasons and subsets within the community. Some are getting prepared for what they believe will be a total collapse of the power grid, others are preparing for an EMP strike and yet still more are getting geared up for an extinction level event. Within the spectrum of “prepping,” we also find those that fear a complete meltdown of the world economy, and as it turns out they may be onto something quite significant. Recent news reports coming from abroad indicate that Russia’s President Vladimir Putin has issued a strong warning to Russian citizens and companies to pull their money from all institutes of Western banking systems in preparation for an economic collapse that many people fear will have a devastating global impact.¶ How close are we to seeing an unprecedented raiding and theft of privately owned bank accounts and financial assets? It would appear that the time is short and the answer may be swifter than we are prepared for. Speaking about EU banksters, Peoples Trust Australia has this to report:¶ “Unbowed by the misery they have inflicted upon the entire continent, however, and in spite of Russian warnings, [European Union officials hardened their stance](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/22/business/global/ecb-hardens-deadline-for-cyprus-bailout-deal.html?_r=0) against Cyprus today by announcing that if the Cypriot government did not allow the raiding of private bank accounts by Monday they would be forced to destroy their banks, which remain closed for the seventh straight day and have no signs of opening soon.”¶ But what has this got to do with us here in America? How would it be possible for an economic collapse to occur here in what is considered one of the greatest and wealthiest countries on the planet? Quite honestly folks the hand writing has been on the wall for several decades and is finally approaching what some are dubbing the “zero” hour for an economic collapse to occur.¶ “Even worse may be what is in store for the Americans, who on 31 January [lost an unlimited US government guarantee](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/31/business/a-rush-to-split-up-big-bank-deposits-to-keep-them-safe.html?pagewanted=all) that was granted on over $1.5 trillion of their bank deposits during the 2008 financial crisis to assure skittish customers that their cash was safe.”¶ True, this “unlimited government guarantee” refers to accounts held by businesses, non-profit organizations and municipalities, however the trickle down effect will be felt around the country and the international community. Even more troubling may be the concerns surrounding the reason for Obama’s recent visit to Israel.

## A2 Credibility Adv

### 1NC Frontline

#### 1. Credibility being essential to effectively dealing with other nations is a myth- the US is the dominant actor and shouldn’t fixate on boosting its credibility. Focusing on credibility stunts effective foreign policy

[Stephen M. Walt](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/author/Stephen%20M.%20Walt) [Professor of International Relations at Harvard]¶ Tuesday, September 11, 2012¶ [Why are U.S. leaders so obsessed with credibility?](http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/09/11/the_credibility_fetish)¶ <http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/09/11/the_credibility_fetish>

What's the biggest mistake the United States has made since the end of the Cold War? Invading Iraq? Helping screw up the Israel-Palestine peace process? [Missing the warning signs for 9/11,](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/11/opinion/the-bush-white-house-was-deaf-to-9-11-warnings.html?_r=1&hp) and then overreacting to the actual level of danger that Al Qaeda really posed? Not recognizing we had a bubble economy and a corrupt financial industry until after the 2007 meltdown?¶ Those are all worthy candidates, and I'm sure readers can think of others. But today I want to propose another persistent error, which lies at the heart of many of the missed opportunities or sins of commission that we made since the Berlin Wall came down. It is in essence a conceptual mistake: a failure to realize just how much the world changed when the Soviet Union collapsed, and a concomitant failure to adjust our basic approach to foreign policy appropriately.¶ I call this error the "credibility fetish." U.S. leaders have continued to believe that our security depends on convincing both allies and adversaries that we are steadfast, loyal, reliable, etc., and that our security guarantees are iron-clad. It is a formula that reinforces diplomatic rigidity, because it requires us to keep doing things to keep allies happy and issuing threats (or in some cases, taking actions) to convince foes that we are serious. And while it might have made some degree of sense during the Cold War, it is increasingly counterproductive today.¶ One could argue that credibility did matter during the Cold War. The United States did face a serious peer competitor in those days, and the Soviet Union did have impressive military capabilities. Although a direct Soviet attack on vital U.S. interests was always unlikely, one could at least imagine certain events that might have shifted the global balance of power dramatically. For example, had the Soviet Union been able to conquer Western Europe or the Persian Gulf and incorporate these assets into its larger empire, it would have had serious consequences for the United States. Accordingly, U.S. leaders worked hard to make sure that the U.S. commitment to NATO was credible, and we did similar things to bolster U.S. credibility in Asia and the Gulf.¶ Of course, we probably overstated the importance of "credibility" even then. Sloppy analogies like the infamous "domino theory" helped convince Americans that we had to fight in places that didn't matter (e.g., Vietnam) in order to convince everyone that we'd also be willing to fight in places that did. We also managed to convince ourselves that credible nuclear deterrence depended on having a mythical ability to "prevail" in an all-out nuclear exchange, even though winning would have had little meaning once a few dozen missiles had been fired.¶ Nonetheless, in the rigid, bipolar context of the Cold War, it made sense for the United States to pay some attention to its credibility as an alliance leader and security provider. But today, the United States faces no peer competitor, and it is hard to think of any single event that would provoke a rapid and decisive shift in the global balance of power. Instead of a clear geopolitical rival, we face a group of medium powers: some of them friendly (Germany, the UK, Japan, etc.) and some of them partly antagonistic (Russia, China). Yet Russia is economically linked to our NATO allies, and China is a major U.S. trading partner and has been a major financier of U.S. debt. This not your parents' Cold War. There are also influential regional powers such as Turkey, India, or Brazil, with whom the U.S. relationship is mixed: We agree on some issues and are at odds on others. And then there are clients who depend on U.S. protection (Israel, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Taiwan, etc.) but whose behavior often creates serious headaches for whoever is in the White House.¶ As distinguished diplomat Chas Freeman [recently commented,](http://www.mepc.org/articles-commentary/speeches/nobodys-century-american-prospect-post-imperial-times) "the complexity and dynamism of the new order place a premium on diplomatic agility. Stolid constancy and loyalty to pre-existing alliance relationship are not the self-evident virtues they once were. We should not be surprised that erstwhile allies put their own interest ahead of ours and act accordingly. Where it is to our long-term advantage, we should do the same."¶ What might this mean in practice? As I've noted repeatedly, it means beginning by recognizing that the United States is both very powerful and very secure, and that there's hardly anything that could happen in the international system that would alter the global balance of power overnight. The balance is shifting, to be sure, but these adjustments will take place over the course of decades. Weaker states who would like U.S. protection need it a lot more than we need them, which means our "credibility" is more their problem than ours. Which in turn means that if other states want our help, they should be willing to do a lot to convince us to provide it.¶ Instead of obsessing about our own "credibility," in short, and bending over backwards to convince the Japanese, South Koreans, Singaporeans, Afghans, Israelis, Saudis, and others that we will do whatever it takes to protect them, we ought to be asking them what they are going to do for themselves, and also for us. And instead of spending all our time trying to scare the bejeezus out of countries like Iran (which merely reinforces their interest in getting some sort of deterrent), we ought to be reminding them over and over that we have a lot to offer and are open to better relations, even if the clerical regime remains in power and maybe even if -- horrors! -- it retains possession of the full nuclear fuel cycle (under IAEA safeguards). If nothing else, adopting a less confrontational posture is bound to complicate their own calculations.¶ This is not an argument for Bush-style unilateralism, or for a retreat to Fortress America. Rather, it is a call for greater imagination and flexibility in how we deal with friends and foes alike. I'm not saying that we should strive for zero credibility, of course; I'm merely saying that we'd be better off if other states understood that our credibility was more conditional. In other words, allies need to be reminded that our help is conditional on their compliance with our interests (at least to some degree) and adversaries should also be reminded that our opposition is equally conditional on what they do. In both cases we also need to recognize that we are rarely going to get other states to do everything we want. Above all, it is a call to recognize that our geopolitical position, military power, and underlying economic strength give us the luxury of being agile in precisely the way that Freeman depicts.¶ Of course, some present U.S. allies would be alarmed by the course I'm suggesting, because it would affect the sweetheart deals they've been enjoying for years. They'll tell us they are losing confidence in our leadership, and they'll threaten to go neutral, or maybe even align with our adversaries. Where possible, they will enlist Americans who are sympathetic to their plight to pressure on U.S. politicians to offer new assurances. In most cases, however, such threats don't need to be taken seriously. And we just have to patiently explain to them that we're not necessarily abandoning them, we are merely 1) making our support more conditional on their cooperation with us on things we care about, and 2) remaining open to improving relations with other countries, including some countries that some of our current allies might have doubts about. I know: It's a radical position: we are simply going to pursue the American national interest, instead of letting our allies around the world define it for us.¶ The bottom line is that the United States is in a terrific position to play realpolitik on a global scale, precisely because it needs alliance partners less than most of its partners do. And even when allies are of considerable value to us, we still have the most leverage in nearly every case. As soon as we start obsessing about our credibility, however, we hand that leverage back to our weaker partners and we constrain our ability to pursue meaningful diplomatic solutions to existing conflicts. Fetishizing credibility, in short, is one of the reasons American diplomacy has achieved relatively little since the end of the Cold War.

#### 2. Multiple alt causes to US relations with Cuba & Latin America

LARRY BIRNS [COHA-Council of Hemispheric Affairs- DIRECTOR]AND FREDERICK B. MILLS[COHA SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW ]¶ [Best Time for U.S.– Cuba Rapprochement Is Now](http://www.coha.org/best-time-for-u-s-cuba-rapprochement-is-now/)¶ –JANUARY 30, 2013¶ <http://www.coha.org/best-time-for-u-s-cuba-rapprochement-is-now/>

The Obama Administration should be prepared to take, in quick progression, three important initial steps to trigger a speedy rapprochement with Cuba: immediately phase out the embargo, free the Cuban five, and remove Havana from the spurious State Department roster of nations purportedly sponsoring terrorism. These measures should be seen as indispensable if Washington is to ever mount a credible regional policy of mutual respect among nations and adjust to the increased ideological diversity and independence of the Latin American and Caribbean regions. Washington’s path towards an urgently needed rehabilitation of its hemispheric policy ought to also include consideration of Cuba’s own pressing national interests. A thaw in US—Cuba relations would enhance existing security cooperation between the countries, amplify trade and commercial ties, and guarantee new opportunities for citizens of both nations to build bridges of friendship and cooperation. For this to happen, the Obama Administration would have to muster the audacity to resist the anti-Castro lobby and their hardline allies in Congress, whose Cuba bashing has no limits. Nevertheless, it is time to replace belligerency with détente.

#### 3. US/ Latin American relations are always in a state of flux

LIZA TORRES ALVARADO[serves as Second Secretary of the Embassy of Venezuela to the OAS GUEST CONTRIBUTOR | 13 MAY 2013¶ The U.S. Must Re-evaluate its Foreign Policy in Latin America¶ <http://www.diplomaticourier.com/news/regions/latin-america/1457>

Historically, relations between Latin America and the United States have been complex, yet constantly evolving. During the 1960s, political changes and social movements challenged the structural basis of United States’ hegemony in the hemisphere. The election of Salvador Allende in Chile, the arrival of Peronism in Argentina, and the development of relations between nationalist governments of the time such as Peru, Bolivia, and Mexico became an obstacle for the United States.

#### 4. Relations are resilient and inevitable

LIZA TORRES ALVARADO[serves as Second Secretary of the Embassy of Venezuela to the OAS GUEST CONTRIBUTOR | 13 MAY 2013¶ The U.S. Must Re-evaluate its Foreign Policy in Latin America¶ <http://www.diplomaticourier.com/news/regions/latin-america/1457>

Although there has been a decline in U.S. influence in the region, its presence is still there. In Venezuela, for example, U.S. oil companies have seen their actions limited, yet they still operate there. The United States is Venezuela’s top commercial partner, as Venezuela supplies 12 percent of U.S. oil imports.¶ Relations between the United States and Latin America have experienced cyclical ups and downs. Geographically, the United States and Latin America are linked and have a natural shared market, so there will always be a relationship of one sort or another. The United States will continue to seek to exert its influence over the region, whether through future plans for the placement of military bases or the promotion of bilateral trade agreements.¶ Leftist governments will have to address challenges such as those caused by social divisions and economic inequality. They will likely continue to focus on implementing their leftist discourse, particularly in the wake of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez’s death. However, it is important to consider that neoliberal philosophies are also still pervasive in many countries of Latin America. This is an advantage for the United States, giving it an opportunity to push for further privatization, but Latin American leftist movements should evaluate themselves and take actions to if they are to avoid a return of neoliberal policies of the 1990s.

### 1NC 1 Ext – Inevitable

#### US leadership is inevitable

**Stokes and Raphael 10** (Doug Stokes is a senior lecturer in international politics at the University of Kent at Canterbury. He is the author of America's Other War: Terrorizing Colombia. Sam Raphael is a lecturer in politics, human rights, and international relations with the Kingston University's School of Social Sciences.JHU press *Global Energy Security and American Hegemony* p. 51)

Despite partial reemergence of rivalry between core powers, therefore, we would argue that accounts that stress the coming fracture in global politics (apparently brought into stark relief by dwindling oil supplies) ultimately underplay the durability of the US-led international order. Washington will continue to play a coordinating role for the capitalist core, and it is this role which means that- to the extent that US hegemony over oil-rich regions remains untrammeled – overt competition for the world’s oil stocks will continue to be overwhelmingly pacified, as rival centers of power opt primarily to work under the American strategic umbrella.

### 1NC 2 Ext – Alt Causes

#### Iran and Sequestration tank US credibility abroad

[Jeff Lightfoot](http://www.acus.org/content/jeffrey-lightfoot) [Jeff Lightfoot is a deputy director of the [Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security](http://www.acus.org/program/brent-scowcroft-center-on-international-security)] March 04, 2013¶ [Sequestration's Credibility Costs](http://www.acus.org/new_atlanticist/sequestrations-credibility-costs)¶ <http://www.acus.org/new_atlanticist/sequestrations-credibility-costs>

The debate over sequestration is focused nearly entirely on the impact of spending reductions on the U.S. economy. Far less attention is given to how the automatic spending cuts would undermine the credibility of American power abroad. As sequestration comes into force, the White House and Congress signal a dangerous lack of resolve to both allies and adversaries. In doing so, they run the risk that a nervous Israel and an adventurous Iran could plunge the Mideast into a war the United States can ill afford.¶ U.S. defense officials warn that sequestration’s $43 billion cuts to U.S. defense spending in 2012 would “hollow out” the armed forces and reduce readiness. Already, sequestration has forced the U.S. Navy to cut the number of deployed aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf from two to one and reduce training of active duty soldiers. Recently retired Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta alerted civilian Pentagon staff that sequestration may require them to take one day per week of unpaid leave. These steps would certainly harm U.S. national security. But ultimately, their true impact on the defense capabilities of the United States is difficult to quantify.¶ Sequestration’s real harm is the damage it poses to American credibility abroad. The ability of a superpower to deter enemies and reassure allies is a product not just of its raw power, but also its willingness to exercise it. In allowing sequestration to occur, the president and Congress will demonstrate a bipartisan willingness to sacrifice U.S. defense interests in order to achieve tactical political gains. This has important implications for Washington’s friends and enemies alike.¶ No two countries are watching the charade of sequestration more closely than Israel and Iran. The timing of sequestration is particularly unfortunate for President Obama, who will make his first visit as U.S. president to Israel in March. The goal of his trip is to reassure Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the United States will not allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon, including through use of military force if necessary. In doing so, Obama hopes to convince the Israelis not to launch a preemptive strike against Iran’s nuclear facilities that could plunge the United States into a regional conflict. Netanyahu will only launch a unilateral strike if he doubts the credibility of U.S. willingness to use force against Iran. The nonchalance of the president and Congress in the face of sequestration undermines U.S. credibility with Israel in advance of Obama’s visit to a key ally and increases the risk of an Israeli strike on Iran.

### 1NC 3 Ext – Relations Flux

#### Relations in a state of flux

**Perry 5-2-13** (Mitch Perry, <http://cltampa.com/tampa/winds-of-change-blowing-around-cuba/Content?oid=3720875#.UbaBNfmThu4>)

Winds of change blowing around Cuba With U.S./Cuba relations in flux, Tampa politicians are making history. On a Friday evening in late March, over 100 people jammed into the back room at Tampa’s Mise en Place restaurant for the beginning of a two-day conference on U.S./Cuba relations. Many in the audience had come to hear the keynote speaker, Miami Democratic Congressman Joe Garcia. Garcia failed to appear as scheduled, but it’s doubtful his comments would have resonated as much as the remarks by Tampa’s own Kathy Castor. The congresswoman stunned many in the audience when she forcefully declared that the U.S. government’s 51-year restrictions on travel and trade with Cuba no longer made any sense — going further in condemning the sanctions than any Florida lawmaker has ever gone. Alluding to the fact that significant issues still remained, Castor insisted that they could be dealt with diplomatically. “I am confident that change is on the horizon,” she began. “Think about what can happen at the Port of Tampa, ports all across the Southeast. All across America. These are values that we share as Americans — trade, travel and the ability to have a productive dialogue. There’s no reason any longer that it should not move forward.”

### 1NC 4 Ext – Impact Defense

#### Heg is self-reinforcing and there’s no impact to decline.

**Brooks and Wohlforth – 2** (Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth, Both are Associate Professors in the Government Department at Dartmouth, “American Primacy in Perspective,” Foreign Affairs, July / August 2002)

PICK A MEASURE, ANY MEASURE TO UNDERSTAND just how dominant the United States is today, one needs to look at each of the standard components of national power in succession. In the military arena, the United States is poised to spend more on defense in 2003 than the next 15 -- 20 biggest spenders combined. The United States has overwhelming nuclear superiority, the world's dominant air force, the only truly blue-water navy, and a unique capability to project power around the globe. And its military advantage is even more apparent in quality than in quantity. The United States leads the world in exploiting the military applications of advanced communications and information technology and it has demonstrated an unrivaled ability to coordinate and process information about the battlefield and destroy targets from afar with extraordinary precision. Washington is not making it easy for others to catch up, moreover, given the massive gap in spending on military research and development (R&D), on which the United States spends three times more than the next six powers combined. Looked at another way, the United States currently spends more on military R&D than Germany or the United Kingdom spends on defense in total. No state in the modern history of international politics has come close to the military predominance these numbers suggest. And the United States purchases this preeminence with only 3.5 percent of its GDP. As historian Paul Kennedy notes, "being Number One at great cost is one thing; being the world's single superpower on the cheap is astonishing." America's economic dominance, meanwhile -- relative to either the next several richest powers or the rest of the world combined -- surpasses that of any great power in modern history, with the sole exception of its own position after 1945 (when World War II had temporarily laid waste every other major economy). The U.S. economy is currently twice as large as its closest rival, Japan. California's economy alone has risen to become the fifth largest in the world (using market exchange-rate estimates), ahead of France and just behind the United Kingdom. It is true that the long expansion of the 1990s has ebbed, but it would take an experience like Japan's in that decade -- that is, an extraordinarily deep and prolonged domestic recession juxtaposed with robust growth elsewhere -- for the United States just to fall back to the economic position it occupied in 1991. The odds against such relative decline are long, however, in part because the United States is the country in the best position to take advantage of globalization. Its status as the preferred destination for scientifically trained foreign workers solidified during the 1990s, and it is the most popular destination for foreign firms. In 1999 it attracted more than one-third of world inflows of foreign direct investment. U.S. military and economic dominance, finally, is rooted in the country's position as the world's leading technological power. Although measuring national R&D spending is increasingly difficult in an era in which so many economic activities cross borders, efforts to do so indicate America's continuing lead. Figures from the late 1990s showed that U.S. expenditures on R&D nearly equaled those of the next seven richest countries combined. Measuring the degree of American dominance in each category begins to place things in perspective. But what truly distinguishes the current international system is American dominance in **all of them simultaneously**. Previous leading states in the modern era were either great commercial and naval powers or great military powers on land, never both. The British Empire in its heyday and the United States during the Cold War, for example, each shared the world with other powers that matched or exceeded them in some areas. Following the Napoleonic Wars, the United Kingdom was clearly the world's leading commercial and naval power. But even at the height of the Pax Britannica, the United Kingdom was outspent, outmanned, and outgunned by both France and Russia. And its 24 percent share of GDP among the six leading powers in the early 1870s was matched by the United States, with Russia and Germany following close behind. Similarly, at the dawn of the Cold War the United States was clearly dominant economically as well as in air and naval capabilities. But the Soviet Union retained overall military parity, and thanks to geography and investment in land power it had a superior ability to seize territory in Eurasia. Today, in contrast, the United States has no rival in any critical dimension of power. There has never been a system of sovereign states that contained one state with this degree of dominance. The recent tendency to equate unipolarity with the ability to achieve desired outcomes single-handedly on all issues only reinforces this point; in no previous international system would it ever have occurred to anyone to apply such a yardstick. CAN IT LAST? MANY WHO ACKNOWLEDGE the extent of American power, however, regard it as necessarily self-negating. Other states traditionally band together to restrain potential hegemons, they say, and this time will be no different. As German political commentator Josef Joffe has put it, "the history books say that Mr. Big always invites his own demise. Nos. 2, 3, 4 will gang up on him, form countervailing alliances and plot his downfall. That happened to Napoleon, as it happened to Louis XIV and the mighty Hapsburgs, to Hitler and to Stalin. Power begets superior counterpower; it's the oldest rule of world politics." What such arguments fail to recognize are the features of America's post -- Cold War position that make it likely to buck the historical trend. Bounded by oceans to the east and west and weak, friendly powers to the north and south, the United States is both less vulnerable than previous aspiring hegemons and also less threatening to others. The main potential challengers to its unipolarity, meanwhile -- China, Russia, Japan, and Germany -- are in the opposite position. They cannot augment their military capabilities so as to balance the United States without simultaneously becoming an immediate threat to their neighbors. Politics, even international politics, is local. Although American power attracts a lot of attention globally, states are usually more concerned with their own neighborhoods than with the global equilibrium. Were any of the potential challengers to make a serious run at the United States, **regional balancing efforts would almost certainly** help **contain them**, as would the massive latent power capabilities of the United States, which could be mobilized as necessary to head off an emerging threat.

## A2 Relations Adv

### 1NC Frontline

#### 1. Relations Tanked – Post-Chavez Unity and regional alliances prevent ties with US

Nazemroaya 4-1-13 (Mahdi Nazemroaya, He is a Sociologist and Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), a contributor at the Strategic Culture Foundation (SCF), Moscow, and a member of the Scientific Committee of Geopolitica, Italy, Global Research and Strategic Culture Foundation, http://www.globalresearch.ca/post-chavez-latin-america-will-continue-to-drift-away-from-the-united-states/5329402)

Post-Chavez Latin America Will Continue to Drift Away from the United States. Many questions are arising about what direction the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Latin America will take now that Hugo Chavez has died of cancer. The answer seems to be that the trend towards regional autonomy and populism in what academics would call a question of, either imagined or real, multi-dimensionality and agency will continue. This is more than just about the so-called “pink tide.” It is about anti-hegemonic alliances that have brought different groups together in Latin America. The work of Antonio Gramsci, the Italian activist and the leader of the Factory Councils in Turin, can help us conceptualize this process. Not only did Gramsci inspire Chavez, but his ideas can be used to explain these alliances. Despite alienating much of what can be called the Venezuelan middle class, Hugo Chavez campaigned to form united fronts, domestically and internationally, during his presidency. From the start, he burst into Venezuela’s political scene with a mixed coalition of activists, a spectrum of leftists, career soldiers, and small capital. He tried to bring the mosaic of different peoples that represented Venezuelan society together formatively. Even when the middle class was being distanced from his Bolivarianism as it radicalized, Chavez admitted that it was of high importance to align with them. As part of a larger cultural project, this included communicating with them through a politics of what the sociologist Stuart Hall would call “articulation.” Bolivarian Historic Bloc Building. In the context of class hegemony, the coalition Chavez built is what Antonio Gramsci would describe as a process of “historical bloc building.” This bloc building process is part of a continuous war of maneuver and continuous war of position for hegemony. In June 2007, Chavez would even refer to his Bolivarian Revolution in Gramscian terms as a bloc building process during a speech he delivered to his supporters. He would tell his supporters that they were witnessing the formation of a new historical bloc and that a historic crisis was unfolding with the dying of the old, capitalist society of the Republic of Venezuela (or the Venezuelan Fourth Republic) and the formation of the new, socialist society of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Bloc formation has not only been important for Chavez’s Bolivarian project. If not all of them, historic bloc formation has been an important part of the vast spectrum of social movements; this is why the scholar Peter Thomas refers to Gramsci’s work on historical blocs as leading to a “theory of social power” for various social movements. In “Some Aspects of the Southern Question,” Gramsci emphasises that the factory workers movement in Northern Italy could not position itself for the leadership of the Italian state without the creation of a historic bloc with the peasants of Southern Italy. This alliance was the real “magic formula” for taking over the state according to Gramsci and not a division of land and estates for the peasantry as the socialists claimed. In Venezuela’s past, after it declared independents, on July 4, 1811, it was defeated by Spanish royalists who convinced the slaves and poorest strata of Venezuelan society to align with them against Simon Bolivar’s republican patriots. After the defeat of what is called the Venezuelan First Republic, a Venezuelan Second Republic would be established in 1814. This too would be defeated, because the poor and slaves would oppose the republicans. Bolivar would realize that slavery had to be abolished and that he needed to form a historic bloc with the slaves and lower strata to become successful. In the case of Chavez and other socialists in Latin America this has also included sectors of local capital. Bolivarian Historic Bloc Building in Neo-Gramscian Terms. The political shift in Venezuela can also be analyzed in terms of an organic, Gramscian historical crisis unfolding in Latin America. This includes an indigenization of and a localization of political decision making in Latin America. To a degree, the transformations in Venezuelan society can be viewed in microcosm as the transformations in Latin America. Behind this transformation is a populist drive aimed at establishing regional autonomy for both socialist movements and local capital, which also explains the strange alliances of Latin American governments that support neo-liberalism, like Argentina and Brazil, with Venezuela. In the context of hegemony at an international relations level, neo-Gramscians would also use a term like bloc building to describe the alliances that Latin America has formed with countries like Russia and Iran. This united front concept has led to pragmatic alliances. An example is the Honduran President Jose Manuel Zelaya’s alliance with Venezuela and ALBA, even though Zelaya was relatively right-wing. This again is tied to the common platform of regional autonomy that is serving to unit left-wing and right-wing governments in Latin America. Chavez made Venezuela pursue a regional agenda as an anti-hegemonic force working to reduce the regional influence of the United States. Just as Simon Bolivar realized, while in exile in Jamaica in 1815, that Venezuela’s freedom could only be attained through a hemispheric pan-Latin American project, so did Chavez. This is why both adopted historic bloc building agendas regionally and internationally. Both realized that a broader struggle or broader struggles were being reflected locally and that networking with others struggling against the same enemy was important. This is what got Bolivar to get the British to be neutral and what has led to Venezuela’s modern alliances with China, Belarus, Iran, and Russia. Regionally, Bolivar built an alliance with the Haitians, who armed him in exchange for a promise to free all the slaves he came across, whereas Chavez has formed the regional organization ALBA and aligned Venezuela with Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua. In 2005, the humiliation of the US government at the Mar del Plata Summit of the Americas through the rejection of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA/ALCA) is an example of the combined success of bloc building and the rising demand for regional autonomy by Latin America’s socialist movements and capital. The Bolivarian Cultural Mission. Social movements would be handicapped without bloc formations or a politics of articulation that aims to secure consent for their leadership by convincing the greater part of society to support them. This struggle for power, which sits at the heart of the Gramscian notion of hegemony, is also tied to a cultural and educational project that needs the intelligentsia. The media and intellectuals are important parts of this. Chavez also reached out to many Venezuelan intellectuals and brought them into his administration. This too has Gramscian contours. Firstly, intellectuals are the representatives of culture. Secondly, organic intellectuals work as the agents and officers of their classes. Thirdly, intellectuals act to organize the structure(s) of society within the realms of the private and public. Gramsci believed that every person through their faculty of reasoning was an intellectual and that there was no such thing as a non-intellectual. What defines an intellectual in the Gramscian sense is an intellectual’s immediate social function as a professional or specialist in a society. Moreover, he categorized intellectual within a typology of two: organic and traditional. The organic intellectual is the representative of its class which works for its collective benefit. The traditional intellectuals are specialists who are not directly involved in class politics; they supposedly circumvent it. Thus, organic intellectuals play important roles in the process of establishing hegemony or creating anti-hegemonic movements as functionaries of a specific group and its interests. It is through them that the dominant ideology in a society is constructed. Without intellectuals the lower strata that form the mass of society will not give their consent to a society’s ruling class either. In the context of class, this is why Gramsci explains that one of the most important tasks of a struggle for empowering itself is to effectively assimilate and win over the traditional intellectuals and turn them into that struggle’s organic intellectuals. Gramsci wrote that it was of importance to break the bond between the intellectuals and peasantry in Southern Italy, because the traditional intellectuals deceitfully kept the peasantry passive and in check under capitalist exploitation for the big landlords, banks, and North Italian capital. Chavez’s Bolivarian project has also tried to do this. The cultural aspects of Chavez’s project are also tied to a politics of articulation, which included his special talk show. Chavez managed to get his message out to the masses that Bolivarianism was working for their interest. This uprooted the articulation of the old elite just enough to allow Chavez to break their ideological dominance in Venezuelan society. This has additionally polarized Venezuelan society, as two cultural projects are competing for hegemony in society. Simon Rodriguez, the teacher of Chavez’s hero Simon Bolivar, said that the people that illuminate humanity’s horizons are not born when they see the light of the world, they are born when they begin to radiate their own inner light onto the world. Hate or love the late Hugo Chavez; he has served as a vanguard for Latin American autonomy and helped countries like Argentina pay off their debts to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The process he led in Venezuela has allowed much of Latin America to marshal itself against Washington.

#### 2. No relations with Cuba for the plan- jailing of US officials

[DAMIEN CAVE](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/damien_cave/index.html) [foreign correspondent for The New York Times, he covers Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.¶ From 2008 to 2010 he served as the Times’ Miami bureau chief, writing on a range of topics] ¶ November 19, 2012¶ Easing of Restraints in Cuba Renews Debate on U.S. Embargo¶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/20/world/americas/changes-in-cuba-create-support-for-easing-embargo.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0>

And Cuba has a long history of tossing ice on warming relations. The latest example is the jailing of Alan Gross, a State Department contractor who has spent nearly three years behind bars for distributing satellite telephone equipment to Jewish groups in Havana.¶ In Washington, Mr. Gross is seen as the main impediment to an easing of the embargo, but there are also limits to what the president could do without Congressional action. The [1992 Cuban Democracy Act](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/cuba/democ_act_1992.html) conditioned the waiving of sanctions on the introduction of democratic changes inside Cuba. The [1996 Helms-Burton Act](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-104publ114/html/PLAW-104publ114.htm) also requires that the embargo remain until Cuba has a transitional or democratically elected government. Obama administration officials say they have not given up, and could move if the president decides to act on his own. Officials say that under the Treasury Department’s licensing and regulation-writing authority, there is room for significant modification. Following the legal logic of Mr. Obama’s changes in 2009, further expansions in travel are possible along with new allowances for investment or imports and exports, especially if narrowly applied to Cuban businesses.

#### 3. Latin America is not a global threat – historical and religious backgrounds block violent conflict

**Blanco et al 09** (Hernan, Founding Partner of Recursos e Investigacion para el Desarello Sustenable [RIDES] in Chile, Edmundo Claro, RIDES associate researcher, Peter Goldschagg, RIDES associate researcher, Alejandra Ruiz-Dana, RIDES researcher, “Regional integration, trade and conflicts in Latin America,” Regional trade integration and conflict resolution, ed. Dr. Shaheen Khan, 2009, Google Books, p.15-18)   
  
Historically, wars in Latin America have taken place due to foreign intervention (e.g., independence wars) or internal struggles (revolutions). A couple of recurrent disputes, often associated with unresolved border issues, have erupted sporadically until the present day. The 1995 clash between Peru and Ecuador over a section of the Amazon River basin is an example. Most tensions associated with geopolitical ambitions of certain regimes have cooled down, but others have increased recently. Venezuela’s president, Hugo Chávez, is touting a Bolivarian project whose aim is to accelerate South American integration and, in his own words, draw a "new geopolitical map…to counterbalance the global dominance of the United States."29 This goes beyond the strengthening of diplomatic ties. Chávez has been stocking up on weapons, buying them from Russia and Spain. Most observers doubt this is merely an indication that Venezuela’s deficient military is being revamped (particularly in the face of deteriorating conditions in the border region shared with Colombia) and are concerned that these purchases affect the balance of power in the Andean region. In general, the region “no longer represents a global threat in terms of security.”30 Indeed, Latin America is often trumpeted “as an example for the rest of the world when one deals with traditional security issues.”31 Latin America’s considerable religious and ethnic homogeneity helps to explain the absence of violent conflict to some degree.32 Simón Bolívar, leader of the independence movements in South America, appealed to the region’s common cultural heritage to seek the union of American states in 1826.33 His call sparked an inter-American cooperation process that eventually led to the creation of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1948, a predecessor to the United Nations (and, in some instances, much more effective than the latter). Prior to the founding of the OAS, the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB) was established in 1942 to coordinate security efforts in the region. This was a collective response to World War II. The IADB is the oldest international organization of its kind in the world and is linked to the OAS through the latter’s General Secretariat. 34 Other unprecedented diplomatic efforts include the formation of the Tlatelolco Treaty of Non- Proliferation of 1967, which was an indirect response to the Cuban Missile Crisis. It set the standard for all nuclear-weapon-free-zone (NWFZ) agreements.35 Direct conflict mediation has also been a hallmark. The Rio Protocol of 1942, for example, put an end to the first war between Peru and Ecuador (circa 1939-1941). Although the 1960s and 1970s were particularly turbulent and good will then faltered in the region, “[t]he strengthening of democracies and the creation of trade blocks in the ’80s–’90s in Latin America contributed to an atmosphere of growing trust and cooperation.”36 Simultaneously, the importance of the military diminished dramatically in the Latin American countries and societies. The end of the Cold War in 1989 marked the end of global bi- polarity and the beginning of international and regional approaches to issues of security and economic concern. Latin America then ceased to look up to the United States as the command and control center for regional security matters, mostly because the economic incentives to do so were withdrawn and, as expected, the political justification was no longer relevant. In the absence of such a powerful benefactor, the challenges ahead seemed daunting for the individual Latin American states. They reacted to the end of the Cold War, to a large extent, in terms of integrated responses. This kind of response was also influenced by the strengthening of the process of globalization worldwide.37

### 1NC 1 Ext – Non UQ

#### Terrorism list makes US relations with Cuba & Latin America tanked now

LARRY BIRNS [COHA-Council of Hemispheric Affairs- DIRECTOR]AND FREDERICK B. MILLS[COHA SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW ]¶ [Best Time for U.S.– Cuba Rapprochement Is Now](http://www.coha.org/best-time-for-u-s-cuba-rapprochement-is-now/)¶ –JANUARY 30, 2013¶ <http://www.coha.org/best-time-for-u-s-cuba-rapprochement-is-now/>

The Obama Administration should be prepared to take, in quick progression, three important initial steps to trigger a speedy rapprochement with Cuba: immediately phase out the embargo, free the Cuban five, and remove Havana from the spurious State Department roster of nations purportedly sponsoring terrorism. These measures should be seen as indispensable if Washington is to ever mount a credible regional policy of mutual respect among nations and adjust to the increased ideological diversity and independence of the Latin American and Caribbean regions. Washington’s path towards an urgently needed rehabilitation of its hemispheric policy ought to also include consideration of Cuba’s own pressing national interests. A thaw in US—Cuba relations would enhance existing security cooperation between the countries, amplify trade and commercial ties, and guarantee new opportunities for citizens of both nations to build bridges of friendship and cooperation. For this to happen, the Obama Administration would have to muster the audacity to resist the anti-Castro lobby and their hardline allies in Congress, whose Cuba bashing has no limits. Nevertheless, it is time to replace belligerency with détente.

### 1NC 2 Ext – Alt Causes

#### Alt Causes – drugs, immigration, and trade

Hakim 2013 (3-27-13, Peter Hakim, Peter Hakim is president emeritus and senior fellow of the Inter-American Dialogue “Post Chavez: Can US Rebuild Latin American Ties”, <http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2013/03/27/post-chavez-can-u-s-rebuild-latin-american-ties/>)

Yet all is not well here, either. Latin America is now effectively (and unfortunately) divided into two economic zones. One includes all the countries that trade freely with the United States. Another seven are members or soon-to-be members of the Brazilian-led South American Market (Mercosur). Political differences, not economic interests, are what keep the two groups apart. Prospects for an economically integrated hemisphere, once a key aspiration of most countries, have faded and seem unlikely to be revived anytime soon. Whether Washington can remake its relationship with Latin America is in question. A sensible and humane reform of U.S. immigration legislation would remove one critical obstacle to more productive relations with many countries, as would a more flexible approach to drug-control policy.

#### Plan can’t solve credibility or relations- leaving Cuba on state sponsored terror list crushes

Los Angeles Times, ¶ Cross Cuba off the blacklist¶ [March 13, 2013](http://articles.latimes.com/2013/mar/13)¶ <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/mar/13/opinion/la-ed-cuba-terrorist-list-20130313>

The State Department says it has no plans to remove Cuba from the list. But Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.), who recently led a bipartisan congressional delegation to Havana, is urging President Obama to consider a range of policy changes toward Cuba, including delisting it, which would not require congressional approval. Designation as a state sponsor of terrorism carries heavy sanctions, including financial restrictions and a ban on defense exports and sales.¶ None of the reasons that landed Cuba on the list in 1982 still exist. A 2012 report by the State Department found that Havana no longer provides weapons or paramilitary training to Marxist rebels in Latin America or Africa. In fact, Cuba is currently hosting peace talks between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and President Juan Manuel Santos' government. And Cuban officials condemned the 9/11 attacks on the United States.¶ Moreover, keeping Cuba on the list undermines Washington's credibility in Latin America. During last year's Summit of the Americas in Cartagena, Colombia, presidents from the hemisphere expressed frustration that the U.S. remains frozen in its relations with Cuba, enforcing an embargo that dates to the Kennedy administration. Cuba is not a model state. The government often fails to observe human rights. Its imprisonment of Alan Gross, a subcontractor for the U.S. Agency for International Development who was sentenced to a 15-year jail term in 2009 after bringing communications equipment into the country, has prompted repeated visits to the island by U.S. officials seeking to secure his release.¶ The list, however, is reserved not for human rights violators but for countries that export or support terrorism. Clinging to that designation when the evidence for it has passed fails to recognize Cuba's progress and reinforces doubts about America's willingness to play fair in the region.

### 1NC 3 Ext – Impact Defense

#### Latin America not key to the economy- cant keep up with India and china, lack of trade diversity, inflation, lack of education

Oppenheimer 2011 (`Latin American decade' or wishful thinking?, 2/5/11, http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/02/05/2053100/latin-american-decade-or-wishful.html?asset\_id=Oppenheimer%20Report%3A%20Interview%20with%20Alejandro%20Foxley&asset\_type=html\_module)

But skeptics paint a more sobering picture of the region's future. Latin America is growing at less than half the rates of China or India; inflation rates in Venezuela and Argentina are about 30 percent; the crime rates in Mexico, Central America and Venezuela are reaching all-time records; education and innovation standards are rapidly falling behind those of the rest of the world, and much of the region's growth is based on world commodity prices that could tumble if China has an economic setback. Over the past 10 years, Latin America's dependence on raw materials has risen from 27 to 39 percent, according to ECLAC'S figures. Instead of diversifying their exports and producing increasingly sophisticated goods, most countries are just exporting more raw materials, much like they did centuries ago. Just as the Standard & Poor's presentation was suggesting a ``Latin American decade,'' the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, released a new Global Competitiveness Index showing that with the exception of Chile and Barbados, there is no Latin American or Caribbean country ranked among the top 50 most competitive economies in the world. My opinion: Despite new economic and political stability in countries such as Brazil, Chile and Peru, much of the current excitement about Latin America is optimism by default. The U.S. economy is not yet out of the woods; Europe is a mess; the Middle East is boiling. And that means international economists are eager to see bright spots wherever they can find them. Latin America is doing relatively well, mostly thanks to external factors. I hope I'm wrong about this, but barring a major move to improve its education standards and diversify its exports, this will not be the ``dawn of Latin America's decade.'' With luck, it will be the start of an era of prosperity for a few countries, and the last two or three years of a cycle of externally driven growth for most others.

#### No impact – change will be gradual and localized

Brook 13 – Environment Institute and School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Adelaide (Barry W, “Does the terrestrial biosphere have planetary tipping points?”, Trends in Ecology & Evolution, online)

Changes in climate and atmospheric CO2¶ Rising atmospheric greenhouse-gas concentrations and¶ the climate change they cause can act as a global driver¶ of changes in biodiversity and ecosystem processes [29]¶ and are known to cause nonlinear responses in ecosys-¶ tems on local to regional scales [30]. For instance, some¶ global-climate models coupled to simulations of vegeta-¶ tion dynamics have predicted that the Amazon basin and¶ its rainforest might exhibit a decadal-scale regime shift¶ to drier savanna at warming of over 3–4 8C [31], whereas¶ boreal forests might respond nonlinearly at a threshold¶ in the 3–5 8C region [1]. However, local and regional¶ ecosystems vary considerably in their responses to cli-¶ mate change and their regime shifts are therefore likely¶ to vary considerably across the terrestrial biosphere.¶ Apart from the direct effects of CO2 fertilization, most¶ climatic variables that drive ecosystem responses, in-¶ cluding temperature and precipitation, are likely to¶ change heterogeneously across the terrestrial biosphere.¶ Intercontinental connectivity mediated by atmospheric¶ trace gases is similarly likely to be weak, because atmospheric¶ CO2 changes driven by biotic changes such as¶ vegetation shifts are far lower and slower than current¶ rates of anthropogenic CO2 inputs from fossil fuel combustion¶ and deforestation. Hence, the heterogeneity and¶ independence of ecosystem responses, and the spatially¶ variable changes in specific climatic drivers, indicate¶ that the biospheric response would tend to be gradual,¶ without a global tipping point at any specific level of¶ change.

## A2 Critical Adv/Aff

### 1NC Frontline

#### 1. The aff’s claims of economic imperialism are a way to shut off legitimate criticism of the Castro regime. Lifting the embargo wouldn’t lead to a better life to Cubans as the problem is their political and economic structures. Even if your criticism of the embargo as being imperialist is true removing it is net worse- even far Left socialists understand the Castro regime is a blanket failure and should be resisted

PAUL D’AMATO [Paul D’Amato is managing editor of the International Socialist Review journal]

Cuba: Image and Reality. ISR Issue 51, January–February 2007 <http://www.isreview.org/issues/51/cuba_image&reality.shtml>

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In many instances, the defense of Cuba’s right to independence and against the U.S. embargo is coupled with a political identification with Castro’s government. Any criticism of Cuba is seen as playing into the hands of imperialism and therefore off-limits. Evidence of problems, at least as the Left might identify them—if acknowledged at all—are excused as necessary or unavoidable distortions resulting from the embargo. “The more honest or open-eyed of the ‘friends,’ at least when speaking tête-à-tête,” wrote Trotsky of the apologists for Stalin’s Russia, “concede that there is a spot on the Soviet sun. But substituting a fatalistic for a dialectic analysis, they console themselves with the thought that ‘a certain’ bureaucratic degeneration in the given conditions was historically inevitable.”2 Defenders of Cuba, at least the less starry-eyed, make the same argument. But as Trotsky wrote, “The stupidity and dishonesty of one’s enemies,” in this case U.S. imperialism, “is no justification for one’s own blindness.”3 The blindness referred to by Trotsky was on full display in the July 2006 issue of the magazine Socialism and Liberation, the magazine of the Party of Socialism and Liberation (PSL, a 2004 break-away from the Workers World Party), which published an article by its editor, Andy McInerney, entitled “A litmus test for socialists: Defending Cuba’s socialist revolution.” In it, McInerney asks the following questions: Was the Cuban revolution a socialist revolution—that is, a revolution that brought the working class to state power? What is the role of the Cuban Communist Party and President Fidel Castro? Do they deserve the support of the progressive and working-class movement in the United States—not just against imperialist intervention but also against internal efforts to overthrow the government? Answering these questions is a test of the fitness of an organization to lead a revolutionary struggle in the United States. According to McInerney, organizations that “claim to be socialist,” such as the International Socialist Organization (ISO, the only group he mentions by name), fail his fitness test because, though they may oppose U.S. intervention in Cuba, they do not answer all of the above questions in the affirmative. For McInerney, this “fitness” (or lack of it) extends to any organization that fails to defend the former Soviet Union, the Eastern Bloc countries, China (even today), and North Korea. Those who “refuse to stand with any of the parties and governments that have tried to build societies free of capitalist rule,” he argues, merely use “leftist-sounding criticisms” as “a cover for capitulation and cowardice in the face of anti-communist propaganda.” Cuba cannot be “state capitalist,” McInerney asserts, because there are no private capitalists, and therefore no competition, inside Cuba. As for the impact of the world market on Cuba, McInerney informs us that Cuba’s participation in the world market is—and this is his most absurd claim—“limited.” Cuba’s state bureaucracy cannot be a class that “owns the surplus value created by Cuban workers,” he argues, because it is not very rich by comparison to capitalists elsewhere. Selectively pointing to Cuba’s period of sustained growth—the first decade of the 1970s—McInerney argues that Cuba’s economic problems can be laid entirely on the doorstep of the U.S. embargo. Long live Stalin and…Saddam? How socialists answer the questions posed by McInerney is indeed important, for it determines whether one identifies socialism with a society of genuine human liberation under workers’ control or with one in which the needs and aspirations of the working class are sacrificed to the demands of state accumulation. As for “cowardice in the face of anti-communist propaganda,” Cold War propagandists did not invent the horrors of Stalin’s Russia—though they took full advantage of them to try and discredit genuine socialism for their own reasons. And just as cynically, the rulers of Russia pointed to the horrors of capitalist society in order to justify their rule. But there really was a gulag. Ante Ciliga, one-time leader of the Yugoslav Communist Party who joined the Trotskyist opposition and who spent several years in a Russian concentration camp, estimated that at the height of the 1930s purges there were ten million people in Russian prison camps.4 Millions died in these camps. Stalin was at this time imprisoning and shooting most of the revolutionaries who had played leading roles in the Russian Revolution—all in the name of socialism. “Nowhere else in the world,” Ciliga wrote bitterly in 1937, “exist such flagrant contradictions between official theory and real life, between hopes and their fulfillment, between word and deed.”5 We leave it to the reader to decide whether it was Ciliga or Stalin who employed “leftist sounding criticisms” as a cover. The Russian Revolution for a brief few years brought workers to power, but the revolution degenerated from within and was finally snuffed out by a state bureaucracy that was hoisted up on the ruins of workers’ power; a process caused by the revolution’s isolation and impoverishment in the face of imperialist encirclement. In short, imperialist invasion and civil war devastated Russia’s already weak economy and its working class. To build up Russia’s heavy industry, needed for Russia’s defenses, the new bureaucracy squeezed the working class and peasantry using coercive means. The theory of “state capitalism” was meant to capture the fact that the bureaucracy, in engaging in this “primitive accumulation,” acted as a kind of state surrogate for the expropriated bourgeoisie. Only the most hidebound sects that survived the fall of Stalinism persist in its defense. One of those sects was an organization that called itself the Workers World Party (WWP)—the political forerunner of the PSL, whose basic politics the PSL still shares. A 1959 splinter from the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, the WWP was led by Sam Marcy until his death in 1998. Though Trotskyist in origin, the hallmark of the WWP, perversely, was its uncritical support for all things Stalinist. The basis of Marcy’s split from the SWP was his support for the Russian invasion of Hungary in 1956 to crush the workers’ councils. PSL still adheres proudly to this tradition. The November 2006 issue of PSL’s magazine Socialism and Liberation published an article by Jon Britton entitled “The real lessons of the 1956 uprising in Hungary,” in which he writes: “Using the same language Bush uses today, the Hungarian uprising of 1956 was cloaked under the veil of ‘freedom and democracy.’ Few of the demonstrators called openly for the restoration of capitalism and landlordism. But the imperialist politicians and press knew where it was heading.”6 Since its founding, the WWP and its offspring have been consistent apologists for bureaucratic regimes from the Soviet Union to North Korea and Cuba. They supported the 1968 Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia (“The ‘democratic socialist revolution’ in Czechoslovakia is in reality counter-revolutionary, anti-socialist and not very democratic,” wrote Marcy7), and Polish General Jaruzelski’s military coup against the Solidarity trade union in 1981. “The workers of the world and the workers in the United States have nothing to gain and a great, great deal to lose by supporting, encouraging, or promoting the cause of this counter-revolutionary, fink outfit misnamed Solidarity,” wrote Marcy in 1981.8 He characterized the Chinese government’s violent suppression of the democracy movement in Tiananmen Square in 1989 as “a victory for socialism.”9 McInerney defended the Chinese government in a 1996 article that credits the Tiananmen crackdown for preventing China from going the way of the former Soviet Union, where, “A tiny handful have become fabulously rich.”10 Yet China at this time was itself in the throes of a series of pro-market economic reforms that were producing a new “fabulously rich” class of Chinese multi-millionaires, many of them leading Communist Party bureaucrats, a fact that led Western economists to lavish China with effusive praise. The Workers World Party has found itself in the company of strange bedfellows for socialists; offering uncritical support, for example, to Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia and Iraq’s Saddam Hussein. During the first Gulf War, Marcy compared Saddam Hussein to the leader of a Roman slave rebellion, Spartacus, who, Marcy noted, “was as much demonized, hated and vilified in his time as Saddam Hussein is today.” Saddam Hussein was a former U.S. ally, a butcher too fearful of domestic revolt to mobilize an adequate defense of Iraq against the U.S. invasion in 2003. Spartacus, on the other hand, a real leader of the oppressed and himself a slave, destroyed seven different Roman armies sent to defeat him. None of this directly answers McInerney’s claims about Cuba, but the historical record of the WWP and its identical offspring is relevant. Cuba came to model its state-led development closely on the Soviet Union until the latter’s demise in the late 1980s. McInerney’s position, which at first seems consistent, is broken, however, by his insistence that China, which has moved substantially to dismantle its aging state sector, is also socialist. Traditionally, Stalinists and their supporters would point to nationalized property as evidence of a regime’s socialist credentials. Today, we can only conclude that for McInerney a regime is socialist merely because it is ruled by a one-party state that declares itself socialist. The ISR’s difference with McInerney is not mainly about Cuba or some random fitness test, but rather about the fundamentals of socialism. For us, socialism is about workers’ self-emancipation and democratic self-rule. For McInerney, it is its opposite. To be sure, Cuba’s national revolution, and its independence from the U.S., must be staunchly defended. Likewise, the gains of the revolution, in particular the establishment of a much-improved public education system and a health care system clearly superior to the private system in the United States, must be defended against any attempt (from without or within) to retract them. But such support does not require one to hold illusions as to the socialist character of the Cuban state, any more than the superiority of Canada’s national health system renders it any less capitalist in its social relations than the United States. A workers’ state? The basic facts surrounding the Cuban Revolution are not in dispute. Castro’s rebel army marched into power after the collapse of dictator Fulgencio Batista’s army in January 1959. Castro’s small band had initiated operations after landing in the boat Granma on the coast of Cuba from Mexican exile in December 1956, with only a few dozen fighters. At the time of Batista’s fall, the rebel army had a few thousand armed soldiers but it also depended on a substantial urban network.11 Though never large enough to pose a serious military threat, the rebel army was able to take advantage of the political vacuum left by the collapse of the Cuban army and state, as well as the disgust the mass of Cubans felt for the old corrupt political system. Castro’s July 26th Movement appealed to all sectors of Cuban society. “Victory was only possible,” Castro told a crowd in New York’s Central Park in April 1959, “because we united Cubans of all classes and all sectors around a single, shared aspiration.”12 The movement’s nationalist populism did not necessarily presage any move toward complete nationalization of the Cuban economy, though there was already a strong tradition of state intervention in the economy. Ernesto “Che” Guevara had embraced a Stalinized version of Marxism and Fidel’s brother, Raúl, also a leading rebel commander, was, if not a member of the Cuban Communist Party, at least a close sympathizer. The July 26th Movement was programmatically vague, but it was committed to a more diversified national economic development that would reduce or eliminate Cuba’s dependence on the United States and on sugar exports. There was mounting hostility from the Cuban bourgeoisie and U.S. investors, especially after the promulgation of a new land reform, and Castro turned toward nationalization and sought out Russian support. The flight of Cuban capital and a series of punitive actions by the U.S. against Cuba accelerated this process. After the April 1961 Bay of Pigs fiasco—the abortive U.S.-sponsored invasion of Cuba by several hundred CIA-trained Cuban exiles—Castro retroactively declared the Cuban Revolution “socialist.”13 What was the class nature of the revolution? The July 26th Movement’s core around Castro consisted of men from different social classes, mostly from the cities, but even those from the working class had not been active in unions or other working-class organizations before joining Castro. Likewise, peasant guerrilla recruits, “typically had little or no history of previous organized peasant struggles,” notes Sam Farber. “This was very important in allowing Fidel Castro to mould these men into faithful followers of his caudillo leadership. In any case, an inner circle of ‘classless’ men unattached to the organizational life of any of the existing Cuban social classes became Fidel Castro’s political core.”14 The collapse of the old state and the discredited status of the old political parties gave Castro’s movement a great deal of room to maneuver. In the end Castro’s movement stood not only above the capitalists who looked to the U.S. to “save” them, but also above the working class and the peasantry. He carried out his measures in their name, but neither class exerted any control over the process. According to McInerney, Castro established a “workers’ state.” His justification for this claim is that the revolution was popular, and the existence of an urban movement against Batista gave it a mass character. “There was support and participation from the masses,” writes McInerney, “such as the selling of bonds to finance the guerrilla fighters.” But even by this account, the urban resistance played an auxiliary role, that of providing material assistance to the guerrillas. More importantly, “support and participation” is by no means the same as saying that it was a mass upheaval or that the masses were in control of the process. Every successful revolution involves mass support and participation—such as the American and French revolutions. Neither created societies run by workers, however. What is so striking is that these bourgeois revolutions involved far greater mass mobilizations than did the Cuban Revolution. A sympathetic observer, James O’Connor, writing in 1964, made a similar assessment of the Cuban Revolution: From the attack by Fidel on the Moncada Barracks in July 1953, throughout the guerrilla war of 1957–58, until late 1959, when the Castro group firmly consolidated political power, not a single peasant revolt ignited the Cuban countryside. Passive resistance, surreptitious aid to Castro’s forces, there were, to be sure; unlike dozens of other political revolutions, however, the peasant class failed to grasp the initiative at any point in the struggle.…. The labor movement, in which over one half of Cuba’s labor force was enrolled, figured even less prominently in the Rebellion. It was in January 1959, after the regular army had received Castro’s final blows, that the working classes shut down Havana’s industry and commerce. Earlier a general strike in April 1958 had been a total failure. In the social revolution of 1959–61, the liquidation of Cuba’s private property system was invariably initiated by the ruling group. The peasantry did not spontaneously seize and cultivate idle lands.15 Castro, in fact, threatened reprisals against “anarchic land distribution,” drafting a law stipulating that anyone seizing land “without waiting for the new agrarian law will lose their rights to benefits from the new agrarian reform.”16 Nor did the urban workers and sugar mill laborers independently occupy the factories (this was a sharp departure from the abortive social revolution of 1933); rebel army or militia units at the direction of the central government took possession of Cuba’s farm land and industry. …The social revolution was more or less orderly because the political revolution transferred power from one relatively small group of men to another, [while] the masses of Cubans…passively supported the social revolution.17 There is no doubt that the new regime was enormously popular—a popularity it quickly consolidated with a series of significant reforms such as wage increases, land redistribution, utility rate and rent reductions, and a mass literacy campaign in the countryside; but Cuba’s was not a workers’ revolution, and it did not lead to a government by and of the working class. Castro’s decision to turn to the Cuban Communist Party (CCP, known then as the Popular Socialist Party, or PSP) was not a turn to the working class. The CCP had long before become a thoroughly Stalinized party, discredited for its withdrawal of support for a general strike against the Machado dictatorship in 1933 and its collaboration with Batista from 1938 into the mid-1940s. The PSP had pledged its support for Batista in exchange for legalization, control of the Cuban Confederation of Workers (CTC) and two positions in Batista’s cabinet. Many activists in the July 26th Movement resented the PSP for its past collaboration with Batista, a resentment that Castro, always tactically flexible, waived aside when the time came. The CCP cadres, with their administrative abilities and ties to Russia, were useful now, especially given the exodus of thousands of technicians, administrators, and managers. “I needed them,” Castro remarked.18 Is there “direct democracy,” or any democracy, in Cuba? Castro supporters, and Castro and Guevara themselves, have argued that Cuba had abandoned “the commonplaces of bourgeois democracy”19 for a new kind of direct democracy. The nature of this democracy derived allegedly from Fidel’s connection with the masses established, for example, at the numerous mass rallies where he would deliver hours-long speeches. But these rallies allowed millions to applaud Castro’s decisions, not debate or guide them. “Fidel Castro will decide on the orientation of the future,” a university director told René Dumont in 1969, expressing a widespread sentiment at the time.20 In the early phases of the revolution, these rallies were genuinely spontaneous expressions of mass enthusiasm, but by the late sixties they had become, according to Dumont, “obligatory.”21 At best, the masses are expected to play a consultative role, at worst, as an echo chamber for decisions already made at the top. For Fidel, according to his 1960 May Day speech, democracy in Cuba was expressed not in elections, “so often prostituted to falsify the will and the interests of the people,” but in “the close union and identification of the government and the people.”22 It is one thing to expose the limits of bourgeois democracy, however, and another to claim that democracy can exist without voting and elections. As Nigel Harris writes, for Marxists, The critique of parliament…was not a rejection of democracy itself. Lenin wrote: “The way out of parliamentarianism is not, of course, the abolition of representative institutions and the electoral principle, but the conversion of the representative institutions from mere ‘talking shops’ into working bodies.” For, Lenin continues: “We cannot imagine democracy, not even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions, but we can and must think of democracy without parliamentarianism.”23 “Close union,” that is, in the sense of support or agreement with decisions taken at the top, is not democracy, unless the close union is a product of elected leaders answering to their constituents. For Castro, however, democracy was not about the power of the masses to make important decisions or to exercise control over their elected representatives. Nigel Harris, writing about Mao’s China, captures in his description a similar reality in Castro’s Cuba: The Chinese Communist party’s view of democracy was taken from the Russia of the 1930s. Democracy is a style of relationship between cadres and non-cadres, between party leaders and cadres, not the subordination of power to the majority. In this sense democracy is not directly about power at all.24 Real working-class democracy would have required the creation of formal institutions of working-class rule, such as existed in the Paris Commune or the Russian Revolution—real decision-making bodies directly elected and instantly recallable, making no more than an average worker’s wage. As Argentine socialist Francisco Sobrino notes, “There can be no substantive democracy (one with truly egalitarian features) without it also being a formal democracy.”25 The fact that the old “national institutions were in varying degrees of disrepute”26 meant that the mass of Cubans did not cry when Castro failed to revive bourgeois elections. Yet neither were new organs of popular democracy created from below to replace them. State power was in the hands of a small group around Fidel. A number of supporters of the Cuban regime point to the existence of mass organizations such as the neighborhood-based Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) and the Federation of Cuban Women, which, says McInerney, “involved the masses of Cuban workers and peasants in the revolutionary process,” as evidence of democracy in Cuba. But the CDRs are not decision-making organs; their day-to-day function is to act as the eyes and ears of the regime at the neighborhood level. As one author notes, “CDR militants have…hounded ‘nonintegrated’ individuals, denouncing and condemning all forms of parasitic and antisocial behavior, as well as collaborating with local authorities in policing neighborhoods. In 1980, according to eyewitness accounts from Mariel refugees, the CDR sponsored ‘repudiation meetings’ designed to chastise, browbeat, and humiliate citizens who wanted to leave Cuba. Often, these meetings turned into violent and vituperative mob action.”27 The Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), like all state-sponsored “mass organizations” in Cuba, is an instrument for the mobilization of women to fulfill tasks determined by the party rather than collective debate and decision-making. A study of women’s role in Cuba by Alfred Padula and Lois M. Smith found that the FMC “was an intensely hierarchical organization.” With its top-down lines of command and its use of military terminology, the FMC—like all mass organizations in Cuba—had a certain martial aura. Activities were perceived as battles, struggles, campaigns; members were organized in brigades and detachments. Uniformity was the watchword. In 1974 the FMC launched a campaign to encourage proper sleeping habits in children, which included a contest “to select a figure and a melody that will be used every day at a specific hour [on radio] to urge the children to go to sleep.”28 As with most important gatherings, Fidel Castro was always the last speaker at FMC congresses, and according to Vilma Espín, president of the FMC, “His words constitute a mandate.”29 Even the much-celebrated system of “poder popular” or people’s power, does not in fact confer any real power on ordinary people. Popular power was touted as a means to institutionalize the revolution after a period of years (it wasn’t formed until 1976!) in which the revolutionaries had lost contact with the masses. A system of municipal and regional assemblies, crowned by a National Assembly—popular power, in the words of Sam Farber, offered “the appearance of democracy without the substance.”30 This is true for a number of reasons. One, there is only one legal political party—the Cuban Communist Party. Barred from campaigning, candidates can only present their political biographies. The electoral law of 1992 allowed for the election of all the members of the National Assembly (previously only 55 percent were elected, the rest appointed from above). A “candidacy commission” consisting of leaders of the CCP and leaders of the mass organizations nominates the candidates, resulting in a situation in which the overwhelming majority of candidates are either members of the CCP or its organizations. What’s more, the number of candidates is restricted in such a way that the municipal electors can either vote for “all the candidates, some of the candidates, or none of them.”31 All of this, in any case, is moot because the National Assembly, which meets only twice a year for a few days, is a rubber-stamp body. As Marifeli Pérez-Stable writes, it is “not a permanent legislature and consequently did not have an actual role in governing Cuba.” Its role is to listen to various reports and approve various budgets, economic plans and laws and vote for them. “Debate could modify but never reject proposals. The assembly approved most matters unanimously, or nearly so.… Invariably…once President Castro spoke definitively on an issue, discussion stopped.”32 Scholar Carollee Bengelsdorf, who observed a meeting of the National Assembly in 1978, witnessed a discussion about Cuba’s housing shortage in which some delegates complained that they had lost voters’ confidence because none of the problems affecting people at the municipal level ever seemed to get solved. On the last day of the assembly, Fidel explained, We cannot simply do things because the electorate says it’s best, that it is good, really beautiful. There are many beautiful things in the world that have to wait to be realized. Unquestionably, there is a yearly plan of work, construction, and when this plan is made, the wishes of the electorate cannot be taken into account.33 Quite simply, the bureaucracy denies democracy because it has decisions it wants to make that it knows Cuban workers won’t accept. The top CCP leaders are also not accountable to their own party. It held its first congress in 1975—ten years after the party’s founding. Since then there have been only five congresses, the last one being held in 2002. In the party itself, as Maurice Zeitlin, a sympathetic observer, described in 1970, “The Central Committee of the Communist Party was not chosen by the rank and file of the party throughout the country, and there seems to be no inclination to carry out such elections with the Party itself.”34 One might expect that in a workers’ state the working class might have some degree of control over economic priorities, but such is not the case in Cuba. The technical advisory councils established in 1960, for example, were seen as a way to get workers to accept management decisions. “It is not a question of discussing all administrative decisions with the workers,” noted Politburo member Armando Hart, “but of obtaining their enthusiasm to support the principal measures of the administration.”35 Guevara and other leaders were of the same opinion. Writes Pérez-Stable, Collective decision-making was never their prerogative: the revolutionary government conferred exclusive power over enterprise matters to management. “Collective discussions, one-man decision-making and responsibility,” Guevara contended. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez seconded him: “We hear from many quarters the idea that workers should decide by majority vote…. Collective management is destructive. Administrators should have, have, and will have the last word.”36 The trade unions in Cuba are also adjuncts of management that promote productivity and labor discipline rather than defend workers’ rights. The justification for this new role for the unions was that the interests of the working class and the state were now identical. “One of the principal functions of the trade unions under socialism,” wrote Raúl Castro in 1971, is to serve as a vehicle for the orientation, directives, and goals which the revolutionary power must convey to the working masses…. The work of the trade unions helps and supports that of the administration…. The principal tasks [in which the unions should be involved] are productivity and work discipline; more efficient utilization of the workday…and most efficient and rational use of both material and human resources.37 Union organizations independent of party (state) control are prohibited, and there is no right to strike. Beginning in 1969, a new law required that “everyone in the labor force carry an identification card listing his occupational and employment record, and making the maintenance of such records on their employees mandatory.”38 This emphasis on the part of the Cuban leadership on the role of unions promoting greater productivity continues today. The September 20, 2006, edition of Granma, an official organ of the CCP, cited a speech by José A. Carrillo Gómez, chief political director of the Cuban armed forces, stating that, “The principal role of the labor unions is to promote productivity and labor discipline.”39 Political opposition to the regime is carefully monitored and frequently suppressed, either through intimidation or imprisonment. And it is not just Miami-funded dissidents who are harassed. Pro-Soviet communists and left-wing critics have also been repressed, as well as various artists. In the 1960s, “The tiny group of Cuban Trotskyists (Posadistas) was in prison for several years after their literature and printing press were seized by the government,” writes Farber. This was a group that supported the Cuban Revolution. “They were eventually released on condition that they cease independent political activity.”40 Ariel Hidalgo spent seven years in prison in Cuba, according to Amnesty International, on the charge of “hostile propaganda,” for writing a pamphlet in 1984 criticizing the “prerogatives” enjoyed by managers but “denied to nearly the whole rank-and-file working population.”41 Where critical opinions that contradict official policy are not permitted one cannot speak of real debate, let alone democracy. Raúl Castro once said that Cuba is “the most democratic state” in history, “even without representative institutions” because it “represents the interests of the working class, no matter what its form and structure.” It is surely a peculiar democracy whose superiority consists in the fact that the governing party rules in the name of the working class without having to answer to any “representative institutions.”42 The Cuban regime squared this circle by asserting that, “The working class considered as a whole…cannot exercise its own dictatorship.” Why? “Originating in bourgeois society,” the working class is “marred by flaws and vices from the past.”43 (Apparently, Raúl, Fidel, Che, and all the other revolutionaries who “originated in bourgeois society” were somehow unmarked by these vices). Ironically, when Raúl Castro made this statement, the head of the CTC was Lázaro Peña, the same Stalinist bureaucrat who was president of the union federation under Batista’s first dictatorship. Some socialists who have no problem seeing through the limitations of bourgeois democracy—the choice every four to six years of who will misrepresent the people—seem to wear blinders when it comes to the absence of any democracy at all in Cuba. The economics of dependency The Cuban economy has gone through a number of different phases since the revolution, each a response to problems created by the previous phase. In the early 1960s, Cuba attempted to introduce a Soviet-model, centrally planned command economy with the aim of rapidly diversifying the economy and abandoning Cuba’s dependence on sugar. This phase ended in crisis as Cuba found itself increasingly in debt to the Russians, yet with declining foreign exchange from its neglected sugar sector. Cuba found that it had moved from dependence on the U.S. to dependence on the Russians, forced to return to sugar exports as its main source of earnings. In the late 1960s, Cuba embarked on a “Guevarist” phase of hyper-centralized growth based on “moral incentives,” the demand for “selfless production,” and the use of military-style campaigns and production competitions (“socialist emulation”). The goal was rapid accumulation and industrialization based on an extremely high rate of investment. The period ended in disaster (practically zero growth), as the economy was thrown into dislocation by the attempt to mobilize the entire population to meet the goal of a ten million ton sugar harvest by 1970. At the end of the post-revolution regime’s first decade, per capita income was below what it had been in 1959.44 In the period of the 1970s, Cuba came back into the Russian fold and adopted a more modest development plan involving an emphasis on quotas and monetary incentives, as well as experiments with market mechanisms. Cuba retained its dependence on sugar throughout the 1970s and 1980s, however, receiving “something like a $5 billion annual subsidy from the Soviet Union—about $500 per capita annually—in the form of a relative price for Cuban sugar bartered for Soviet oil that far exceeded prevailing world market price.”45 This did not prevent Cuba from entering a period of economic crisis in the late 1970s, and again in the late 1980s, in which declining sugar prices reduced Cuba’s foreign exchange earnings and drove up its trade deficit and foreign debt. Cuba’s economic troubles, in other words, did not begin in the 1990s. To respond to the 1980s crisis, Castro initiated the “campaign to rectify errors and negative tendencies” in 1986 and revived a number of features of the late sixties—moral incentives, the expansion of the state’s role and the restricting of various market concession made earlier in the decade, and the reintroduction of work brigades. Castro’s rhetoric spoke of the need to curb “two-bit capitalists” who were “forgetting about the country.”46 But at the same time he began opening up the country to more foreign investment and expanding the tourist industry. The campaign was devised to increase the available surplus wealth to pay back Cuba’s mushrooming foreign debt. In addition to clamping down on private business transactions and corruption, the government “came out against employment security, wage guarantees, and unemployment and seniority rights,”47 and initiated cuts in the supply of important consumer products like milk and sugar. The government also doubled transportation fares, raised electricity rates by 30 percent, “stopped providing snacks at work centers, and… replaced the afternoon meal (until then offered at child care institutions) with a snack.”48 The rectification campaign was in part Castro’s response to perestroika in Russia and Solidarity in Poland. His attacks on bureaucratic privilege in this context were in large part ideological (though he was concerned to curtail theft at all levels)—to ease public opposition to austerity by presenting it as shared sacrifice. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc in the late 1980s and early 1990s led to post-revolutionary Cuba’s worst economic crisis in its history. The crucial subsidy Russia had provided to Cuba suddenly disappeared. Below market-rate oil shipments, some of which Cuba had resold at a profit, dried up. The Eastern Bloc had accounted for 80 percent of Cuba’s imported machinery, and imported 63 percent of Cuba’s sugar (at higher than world market rates), as well as 73 percent of its nickel exports. The results were catastrophic. Imports fell 70 percent between 1990 and 1993. “Nearly half of all factories were shut down or forced to operate on a much reduced scale, for lack of imported raw materials, spare parts, and petroleum.”49 Cuba’s economy went into a tailspin, declining by 36 percent in the same period. Cuba was forced to import bicycles and use horse-drawn carts, and malnutrition was widespread.50 A UN observer who visited Cuba in 1996, Solon Barraclough, reported rural shortages of basic farm implements like machetes and hoes, clothing, paper, pencils, books, and medical supplies like aspirin and antibiotics.51 Yet the urban economy was even worse off, prompting the state to send urban refugees into the countryside.52 In response to the crisis, Cuba declared itself to be in a “Special Period in Peacetime” and initiated a series of reforms to cope with the crisis: opening up of foreign investment, in particular to joint (50-50) enterprises; decentralization of foreign trade activity; an increase in tourism; a restructuring of land ownership toward cooperatives and small farms (in an effort to increase domestic food production); authorization of licensed self-employment on a limited basis; creation of handicraft markets; greater autonomy and self-financing for state-owned enterprises; and legalization of dollar holdings. Cuba’s chief economic strategist, Carlos Lage, claims that Cuba’s special reforms are “not an opening toward capitalism, but rather a socialist opening toward a capitalist world.”53 The head of Cuba’s national bank explained that, “We have to think like capitalists but continue being socialists.” Castro defended “creeping privatization,” citing the need for a “practical attitude,” and the slogan became “capital yes, capitalism no.”54 This opening included allowing foreign investors in joint ventures (of which there were 340 in 2003, down from a peak of 540 in 2000)55 to repatriate all of their share of the profits. Whereas the Cuban managers of these concerns are paid salaries comparable to their foreign counterparts, the Cuban workers in these businesses are paid by an agency of the Cuban state, which receives $450 in hard currency per month, but only pays the equivalent of fifteen Cuban pesos per month in wages. In order to attract foreign investment, the Cuban government “exempted investors from compliance with labor laws, and it allowed for unlimited profit repatriation for up to ten years.”56 Not even Cuba’s state-run unions were permitted in the joint ventures. According to Jorge Pérez-López, the special labor regime of workers in joint ventures and the tourist industry allows employers more leeway to apply disciplinary action, requires longer probationary periods, longer hours, and allows more irregular work schedules. Workers also have less job security, as employees can be dismissed if they are not deemed “suitable.”57 In addition, the state began an economic program known as “perfeccionamiento empresarial” (enterprise optimization)—first adopted by enterprises run by Cuba’s armed forces in the late 1980s—allowing some enterprises to buy and sell directly on the world market and set their own labor policies. The aim was to “increase the maximum efficiency and competitiveness” of state enterprises.58 Low world market sugar prices and declining crop yields prompted the state to restructure the industry, shutting down half the sugar mills and diverting fields for cane production to other agricultural products. Tourism revenue grew from $243 million in 1991 to $1.8 billion in 2001, surpassing sugar as Cuba’s main industry and accounting in 2000 for 41 percent of Cuba’s foreign exchange.59 Dollar remittances (estimated at as much as $1 billion) became a crucial source of foreign exchange as well as a lifeline for many Cubans on the island. Cuba expanded its biotechnology industry, and sought foreign investors from Canada and China, to revive its nickel industry. Cuba now gets Venezuelan oil at below-market prices and has developed a series of joint economic ventures with Venezuela and China. Though there had been some recovery, the industrial sector is still far from its 1989 levels, there are shortages of consumer goods, chronic underemployment, and Cuba’s per capita income “is at best marginally better now than in 1957,” according to one left-wing economist.60 The promotion of tourism brought back features that were more redolent of pre-revolutionary Havana, which was not altogether discouraged by the Cuban government: In its drive to attract tourists the government played on the image of the “old Havana.” Three of the main Cuban organs that operate resorts—Cubatur, Cubanacán, and Cimex—hosted a Playboy trip around the time the Special Period was launched. The government allowed the magazine to feature an article on the “girls of Cuba,” contingent on coverage of the island’s tourist facilities. Even the Ministry of Tourism began to run travel advertisements abroad featuring string bikini-clad sexy Cuban girls. If that were not enough, in 1991 the government opened a Tropicana nightclub in Santiago de Cuba, a club capitalizing on the name of Havana’s most famous prerevolutionary nightspot. The government’s interest in hard currency led it to play on its prerevolutionary reputation and to reverse its earlier puritanical stance on such matters.61 Tourism introduced a sort of economic apartheid in Cuba, with a marked contrast between tourist wealth and extravagance and the austerity and low pay of most islanders. The legalization of the dollar in 1993 created a parallel economy that increased income inequality on the island. Those with access to dollars (about 60 percent) had access to services and goods that others did not. The economy has become so distorted that state-employed professionals like doctors and professors with no access to dollars have a lower income than taxi drivers in the tourist zone, prompting the former to moonlight as cabbies and small restaurant operators. For many young workers, pay is so low that many decide to become self-employed in order to improve their living standards. As in times past (for example, the 1980 Mariel exodus), the regime, though it regularly restricted travel abroad among ordinary Cubans, has allowed the exodus of thousands of poor Cubans, which acts as both an economic and political safety valve. In 2004, some of these economic reforms were curtailed—for example, small businesses were restricted again and Castro, in retaliation for Bush’s new restrictions on remittances and visits by Cuban Americans to the island—decreed that dollars had to be exchanged for convertible pesos for a 10 percent surcharge, and enterprises’ access to foreign exchange was recentralized through the state. But another motive seemed to be that the state would be able to concentrate more hard currency for imports and debt repayment. Cuba’s hard currency debt stands at almost $14 billion as of 2004, not counting the estimated $22 billion it still owes to the ex-Eastern Bloc countries, a fact that makes it difficult for Cuba to secure, when it can, other than short-term, high-interest loans. Even Cuba’s debt to Venezuela, in spite of paying cheaper than market prices for Venezuelan oil, is estimated at $2.5 billion. According to economist Carmelo Mesa-Lago, The scarcity of hard currency has been aggravated by several problems: continuous deterioration in the terms of trade; a merchandise trade deficit of about $3 billion from 2000 through 2004; a decline in foreign direct investment from 2001 through 2004; cash purchases of food and agricultural products from the United States that reached a cumulative total of $1 billion at the start of 2005; [and] extensive imports of equipment, spare parts, and goods in 2004 due to the electricity crisis and subsequent paralysis of great parts of the tourist sector.62 These zig-zags do not represent an alternation between capitalist and socialist measures, but rather an effort to overcome the problems that each economic shift creates. Each time the state opens up the economy it runs the risk also of opening things up beyond its control. It then lurches in the other direction, only to find that it creates other problems. The economic rationale for centralization of the economy and banning of private economic activity is that it allows the state to concentrate in its hands greater surplus and prevent “leakage” of wealth. However, the shortages of basic goods and the long lines for goods and services lead to high rates of absenteeism and resentment, lower productivity rates, and economic decline. In response, the state moves toward allowing private market mechanisms to operate more freely, including small service-related businesses, legalization of the black market, and so on. And the cycle begins again. State (and private) capitalism in Cuba Marx wrote in Capital that individual capitalists are driven by market competition to maximize profits: Competition makes the immanent laws of capitalist production to be felt by each individual capitalist, as external coercive laws. It compels him to keep constantly extending his capital, in order to preserve it, but extend it he cannot, except by means of progressive accumulation.63 Defenders of Cuba’s socialist character claim that these laws don’t apply because there is no competition domestically between firms. This purely national view fails to take into account that Cuba is not a self-sufficient entity, but a small island nation that does not even produce all of its own food, let alone the energy, raw materials, machinery, spare parts, and investment funds that it needs to develop. The “external coercive laws” of capitalism impose themselves in the form of the world market, from which Cuba, a country dependent on imports and exports to survive, and which is deeply in debt to international creditors, was not able to escape at any point in its history. What has guided the investment and production priorities of the Cuban state? In Castro’s 1978 speech to the National Assembly previously referred to, he explained that the overarching need to invest Cuba’s resources in “economic and industrial development” was “an absolute,” and that therefore “the priority given to such investment was not open to discussion, or questioning.”64 Historian Louis Pérez, Jr., tells of how the regime’s drive to reduce Cuba’s sugar dependency led to an economic policy in the 1960s in which “consumption was curtailed to divert investment into industrialization and rapid economic growth.”65 As an economy dependent on exports, and until recently on sugar, the Cuban state has, just like an individual capitalist, been concerned not with what “use value” it produces, but with its value, i.e., what can be gotten in return for as little expenditure as possible. After the initial failures of the Guevarist phase, its entire development strategy rested in large part on the maximization of profit on a single export. The exigencies of the world market compel the state to engage in “progressive” accumulation—the expansion of surplus value—for the purposes of reinvestment and expansion of the Cuban economy. As with “private” capitalism, in Cuba “living labor is but a means to increase accumulated labor.” Of course, as the provider of social services, the state has been responsible for the maintenance of certain minimum living standards for the Cuban working class, but the limits of improvement of this “social wage” are conditioned by the needs of accumulation. That is the meaning of the countless statements by Castro & Co. that workers must sacrifice today for a better tomorrow. “We should not speak of improving living conditions,” Castro said in his speech commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the revolution. “The most sacred duty of this generation is to devote their efforts to the development of the country…. This generation must make sacrifices…. Other generations will live better.”66 It is evident in the fact that the bureaucracy has never been able to solve Cuba’s housing crisis—there was a shortage of one million housing units at the end of the 1970s (and still more than 700,000 today),67 a result not simply of shortages, but reflects “the priority given to construction programs in other sectors.”68 Yet this sacrifice has never been a shared sacrifice. Like any ruling class, the Cuban nomenklatura also reserves special material privileges for itself, though the income disparities in Cuba (reported by Dumont to be about 9.4 to 1 in 196969) are not comparable to those, for example, in the United States. But money is not an adequate indication of the privilege of the ruling class in Cuba. In the Stalinist economies political access to goods and services has always been more important than access to money. As Louis Pérez, Jr., writes, whereas many durable consumer goods for workers and poor Cubans have been rationed—often goods like refrigerators and TV sets are awarded only to the most “productive” and “conscious” workers—“at a higher level…the government made available to high-level technicians, labor union leaders and ranking state functionaries valued goods and services, including automobiles, better housing, and access to vacations abroad.”70 There are also special shops and clinics for the elite. Though some Castro supporters may concede these inequalities of wealth, they deny that the Cuban bureaucracy is a ruling class, or that Cuba is capitalist, on the grounds that there are no private owners (although even this view has to be modified in light of the joint ventures). Classes are defined by their relationship to the means of production, and by who thereby controls the surplus. In Cuba, the state owns most of the economy, and the top echelons of the CCP control the state, and therefore the surplus; the working class, which is deprived of control, and therefore ownership, of the means of production, as well as the surplus it produces, is an exploited class. The Catholic Church was the largest feudal landowner in Europe. It exploited peasants even though no Vatican high officials privately owned Church land. The fact that individual bishops could not inherit or pass on landed wealth did not negate the fact that the church as an institution was an exploiter of the peasantry on the lands it collectively owned.71 The same holds true for Cuba. What makes Cuba capitalist is the pressure of the world market on the priorities and decisions of the Cuban ruling class. Socialism on one island is no more possible than socialism in one factory. The fact that work discipline must continually be reinforced is strong evidence that Cuban workers do not feel themselves to be owners of the means of production. In response to the wide gap between wages and the scant availability of consumer goods, workers often work only as much as is necessary to buy their rations. Forms of labor coercion are needed to supplement efforts to convince workers to work under conditions of austerity. Absenteeism and theft are recurrent themes in the speeches of state officials. Lacking other means of redress for their low standards of living (such as striking), Cuban workers engage in these more passive forms of resistance. Workers absent themselves from their official jobs to engage in various unofficial activities to supplement their wages. This behavior only accelerated in past years because of the introduction of the parallel dollar economy related to tourism and dollar remittances from the United States. Conclusion No country can escape from the effects of the world market, least of all a small island economy. While small nations can achieve political independence from imperialism—Cuba is living proof—the idea of “economic independence” was always a nationalist pipe dream. Cuba’s inescapable reliance on one or two key exports (sugar, then tourism) its dependence on foreign investment and imports for capital, raw materials, and even food—first from the Eastern Bloc, today from elsewhere—is proof of this truth. If Cuba is able to diversify its exports in biotechnology, nickel, oil, and services (i.e. doctors) it will not have thereby strengthened “socialism” in Cuba. It will have been accomplished by significant investment from Canadian, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, and Venezuelan capital. The use of state planning to develop the products that give Cuba a “comparative advantage” in the world market is a development strategy employed by dozens of once less developed capitalist countries, from South Korea to Singapore. It has no more to do with socialism than Mexico’s national oil company. The class nature of Cuba must be separated from the question of the defense of Cuba against U.S. imperialism, for they are not identical questions. Too often liberals have historically sided with U.S. aims and failed to defend countries under U.S. assault—witness the failure of the Left to oppose U.S. intervention in Somalia and Panama—because they could not identify politically with the regimes of those states. The uncritical defense of Castro’s rule is the flip side of the same approach. All sincere anti-imperialists should condemn the cruel U.S. economic blockade of Cuba; but we should have no illusions as to what the lifting of that embargo would mean. The proximity of Cuba to the U.S. and the latter’s size and power will lead to the more or less rapid reintegration of Cuba with the U.S. economy. With special rules that allow it to circumvent restrictive laws against trade and investment with Cuba, U.S. agribusiness has exported $1.6 billion in products to Cuba between 2001 and 2005, making Cuba the third largest U.S. food importer in Latin America.72 The Bush administration has also authorized a San Diego company to market three anti-cancer vaccines developed by the Center for Molecular Immunology in Havana.73 A lifting of the embargo would lead not to the flourishing of socialism, by whatever definition. Cuba’s social services—its free health care and educational system especially—would come under threat.

#### 2. The Aff is naïve- power always exists in the international arena. If the US doesn’t exercise imperial force others will and that is comparatively worse

Niall Ferguson [MA, D.Phil., is Laurence A. Tisch Professor of History at Harvard University. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and a Senior Research Fellow at Jesus College, Oxford] IN "IMPERIAL DENIAL." WITH NONNA GORILOVSKAYA. MAY/JUNE 2004. http ://www. globalpo I icy . org/empire/analvs is/2004/052 mperi al d en i al .htm)

Well, it could be for a very short-time indeed. One of the nightmare scenarios that I have been thinking about a lot recently is that there is simply a world without hegemony in which the United States goes: "Oh dear, this is too nasty and morally compromising, we are going home." The Europeans are entirely taken up with their own problems of demographic, aging, and immigration. Out in Asia, the big issue is essentially economic development for the hinterland of China. Nobody wants to play the role of empire in mid-twenty-first century history and that's a perfectly plausible scenario. and its not a very comforting one. Those of my critics who say "empire is always bad, we should never have empire," have not looked at the historical alternatives to empire Throughout most of recorded history there have been empires. Empires essentially create order. In their absence, you don't end up with lots of happy, little nation-states full of people sitting around campfires singing John Lennon's "Imagine." What you end up with is civil war, anarchy. You end up with -- say in the 9th century- the Vikings who were quintessential beneficiaries of the collapse of empire. They were able simply rampage around Europe looting and pillaging cities. But that scenario - what I would call .the "Dark Age" scenario --is a much scarier. one in the 21st century than in the 9th century. Technology gives the Vikings of our time the possibility of dirty bombs. In that sense, empire is to be preferred to the available alternatives. That's why I want the United States to keep its nerve, to go the distance, to recognize that the alternatives to empire are worst, not better. And in that sense, my arguments for liberal empire or whatever you want to call it -- hegemony, primacy, you name it — are really activated by a sense that the alternatives involve more violence, more repression, more hardship, especially for the people of the Middle East.>

3.

#### 3. The Cuban government skims money from foreign investment and tourism, the plan plays right into their hands

[Mitchell Bustillo](http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/author/mitchell-bustillo/) [will be attending Columbia University in the fall where he will be majoring in Engineering with a minor in Economics on a Pre-Law track. He is a first-generation Cuban-American, a Hispanic Heritage Foundation Gold Medallion Winner, and a former United States Senate Page, appointed by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. He one day hopes to return to the Hill]¶ Time to Strengthen the Cuban Embargo¶ May 9, 2013¶ <http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2013/05/09/time-to-strengthen-the-cuban-embargo/>

Still there is the idea that further increasing American tourism to this nearby Caribbean island will at least aid their impoverished citizens in some manner, but this is neither a straight-forward nor easy solution. From the annual throng of American visitors, U.S. Senator Marco Rubio [declared](http://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2011/2/icymi-under-rubio-questioning-obama-administration-admits-to-risk-of-cuba-travel) at a 2011 Western Hemisphere Subcommittee Hearing that an estimated, “$4 billion a year flow directly to the Cuban government from remittances and travel by Cuban Americans, which is perhaps the single largest source of revenue to the most repressive government in the region.”¶ These remittances are sent by Americans to help their Cuban families, not support the Cuban government. It is also a common belief that the Cuban embargo is a leading cause of poverty among the Cuban citizens and that lifting the embargo would go a long way toward improving the Cuban standard of living. However, no amount of money can increase the living standards there as long as their current regime stands. “After all, the authorities were already skimming 20 percent of the remittances from Cuban-Americans and 90 percent of the salary paid to Cubans by non-American foreign investors,” [states Alvaro Vargas Llosa](http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2492), Senior Fellow of The Center on Global Prosperity at The Independent Institute.¶ However unfortunate it may be, Cuba, in its current state, is a nation consisting only of a wealthy and powerful few and an impoverished and oppressed proletariat, who possess little to no means to escape or even improve their fate. Lifting the trade embargo will not increase the general prosperity of the Cuban people, but it will increase the prosperity of the government. Ergo, the poverty and dire situation of the Cuban people cannot be blamed on the United States or the embargo.

#### 4. The aff is an act of moral irresponsibility actively rewarding a brutal and oppressive regime- the Embargo is the only way to pressure the regime into reform. The status quo is the most ethical act

Miguel Olivella [Florida based attorney and writer about Cuban-American issues]¶ May 24, 2011¶ Miguel Olivella: Morality, not votes, guides embargo¶ <http://www.tallahassee.com/article/20110525/OPINION05/105250303/Miguel-Olivella-Morality-not-votes-guides-embargo?nclick_check=1>

Carl Leubsdorf advances the notion that the Cuban embargo should be abandoned since it is in place solely due to political considerations that trump "the national interest." If Leubsdorf had his way, we would lift the embargo to create an atmosphere of change in Cuba that would enable Cuba to join the global democratic revolution. Leubsdorf appears to suffer from an extreme case of naivete when it comes to the likes of Fidel and Raul Castro. But before presenting my humble opinion as to justifiable reasons for the embargo, let's dispel the premise for Leubsdorf's opinion piece, i.e. that the Cuban-American vote dictates policy positions by Florida politicians. Recently, Gov. Rick Scott expressed support for the embargo. It is no secret that the governor is pro-business. The business community at large favors a lifting of the embargo because of the obvious trade and financial opportunities. This constituency is much larger than the Cuban-American constituency, and thus Gov. Scott's position on the embargo is clearly a net vote count loss for him. Even an unabashed Florida liberal such as Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz is vehemently opposed to relaxing U.S. policy toward Cuba. The Cuban-American community can hardly be considered Wasserman Schultz voters in light of fundamental disagreement with her overall political philosophy. Moreover, I would suspect that her support of the embargo has cost her votes with her Democratic base. History also teaches us that the Cuban-American vote does not translate into election victory in Florida. If Cuban-American votes could truly carry an election, President Obama — a vocal proponent of abandoning the embargo — would never have won Florida in 2008. So why would our pro-business governor and the liberal Wasserman Schultz refuse to sanction a lifting of the embargo? Because they are both guided by a moral compass that will not allow them to reward one of the most reprehensible, Machiavellian regimes of our time with more trade than currently is in place. And, unlike Leubsdorf, they do not suffer from the rose-colored-glasses belief that trade with Cuba will engender democracy. For some 50 years, the Castro regime has prohibited all political dissent. My fellow countrymen and relatives have been tortured, executed and imprisoned for daring to express any political view that differs from the regime's philosophy. There is no right to free expression, privacy, association, assembly, movement or due process of law. Enforcement of government policy is carried out through surveillance, detentions, house arrests, travel restrictions, criminal prosecutions and dismissals from employment. Rewarding this conduct with open trade is unconscionable. As for democracy, Fidel and Raul Castro have perfected a tyrannical system that has made them and their friends inordinately rich. This power structure includes not only human right atrocities, but a complete dominance over the economy, which is in the exclusive hands of the Cuban military and the Castros' circle of friends. Any company seeking to engage in commerce with Cuba must go through the state, and since the Castros enjoy unfettered control over all aspects of the economy, the only beneficiaries of commerce would be the Castros. No thinking person can possibly believe that the Castros would allow democracy to flourish, since it would jeopardize what they have been zealously protecting for 50 years — lives of privilege and wealth.

#### 5. Moral absolutism is complicity with violence – it allows people to die for the sake of clean hands

Isaac, 2002

(Jeffrey C., James H. Rudy professor of Political Science and director of the Center for the Study of Democracy and Public Life at Indiana University, Bloomington, “Ends, Means and politics,” *Dissent*, Spring)

As writers such as Niccolo Machiavelli, Max Weber, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Hannah Arendt have taught, an unyielding concern with moral goodness undercuts political responsibility. The concern may be morally laudable, reflecting a kind of personal integrity, but it suffers from three fatal flaws: (1) It fails to see that the purity of one’s intention does not ensure the achievement of what one intends. Abjuring violence or refusing to make common cause with morally compromised parties may seem like the right thing; but if such tactics entail impotence, then it is hard to view them as serving any moral good beyond the clean conscience of their supporters; (2) it fails to see that in a world of real violence and injustice, moral purity is not simply a form of powerlessness; it is often a form of complicity in injustice. This is why, from the standpoint of politics— as opposed to religion—pacifism is always a potentially immoral stand. In categorically repudiating violence, it refuses in principle to oppose certain violent injustices with any effect; and (3) it fails to see that politics is as much about unintended consequences as it is about intentions; it is the effects of action, rather than the motives of action, that is most significant. Just as the alignment with “good” may engender impotence, it is often the pursuit of “good” that generates evil. This is the lesson of communism in the twentieth century: it is not enough that one’s goals be sincere or idealistic; it is equally important, always, to ask about the effects of pursuing these goals and to judge these effects in pragmatic and historically contextualized ways. Moral absolutism inhibits this judgment. It alienates those who are not true believers. It promotes arrogance. And it undermines political effectiveness.

### 1NC 1 Ext – Plan Increases Human Rights Abuses

#### The aff cites imperialism as a justification for ending the embargo but the Castro regime has historically used these strategies to oppress his people and tighten his grip on the economy- the plan INCREASES the oppression of Cubans

Jaime Suchlicki [Emilio Bacardi Moreau Professor of History and International Studies and the Director of the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami. He was the founding Executive Director of the North-South Center. For the past decade he was also the editor of the prestigious Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs. He is currently the Latin American Editor for Transaction Publishers- University of Miami] June 2000

The U.S. Embargo of Cuba IMPLICATIONS OF LIFTING THE U.S. EMBARGO AND TRAVEL BAN

<http://www6.miami.edu/iccas/USEmbargo.pdf>

Opponents of U.S. policy toward Cuba claim that if the embargo and ¶ the travel ban are lifted, the Cuban people would benefit economically; ¶ American companies will penetrate and influence the Cuban market; the ¶ Communist system would begin to crumble and a transition to a democratic ¶ society would be accelerated.¶ These expectations are based on several incorrect assumptions. First, ¶ that Castro and the Cuban leadership are naïve and inexperienced and, ¶ therefore, would allow tourists and investments from the U.S. to subvert the ¶ revolution and influence internal developments in the island. Second, that ¶ Cuba would open up and allow U.S. investments in all sectors of the ¶ economy, instead of selecting which companies could trade and invest. ¶ Third, that Castro is so interested in close relations with the U.S. that he is ¶ willing to risk what has been upper-most in his mind for 40 years – total ¶ control of power and a legacy of opposition to “Yankee imperialism,” – in ¶ exchange for economic improvements for his people. During the Fifth ¶ Communist Party Congress in 1997, Castro emphasized “We will do what is ¶ necessary without renouncing our principles. We do not like capitalism and ¶ we will not abandon our Socialist system.” ¶ Castro also reiterated his long-standing anti-American posture, ¶ accusing the U.S. of waging economic war against his government and ¶ calling for “military preparedness against imperialist hostility.”¶ A change in U.S. policy toward Cuba may have different and ¶ unintended results. The lifting of the embargo and the travel ban without ¶ meaningful changes in Cuba will: ¶ Guarantee the continuation of the current totalitarian structures. ¶ Strengthen state enterprises, since money will flow into businesses ¶ owned by the Cuban government. Most businesses are owned in ¶ Cuba by the state and, in all foreign investments, the Cuban ¶ government retains a partnership interest.¶ Lead to greater repression and control since Castro and the ¶ leadership will fear that U.S. influence will subvert the revolution ¶ and weaken the Communist party’s hold on the Cuban people. ¶ Delay instead of accelerate a transition to democracy on the island. ¶ Allow Castro to borrow from international organizations such as ¶ the IMF, the World Bank, etc. Since Cuba owes billions of dollars ¶ to the former Soviet Union, to the Club of Paris, and to others, and ¶ has refused in the past to acknowledge or pay these debts, new ¶ loans will be wasted by Castro’s inefficient and wasteful system, ¶ and will be uncollectible. The reason Castro has been unable to pay ¶ back loans is not because of the U.S. embargo, but because his ¶ economic system stifles productivity and he continues to spend on ¶ the military, on adventures abroad, and on supporting a bankrupt ¶ welfare system on the island.¶ Perpetuate the rather extensive control that the military holds over ¶ the economy and foster the further development of “Mafia type” ¶ groups that manage and profit from important sectors of the ¶ economy, particularly tourism, biotechnology, and agriculture. ¶ Negate the basic tenets of U.S. policy in Latin America which ¶ emphasize democracy, human rights, and market economies. ¶ Send the wrong message to the enemies of the U.S.: that a foreign ¶ leader can seize U.S. properties without compensation; allow the ¶ use of his territory for the introduction of nuclear missiles aimed at ¶ the U.S.; espouse terrorism and anti-U.S. causes throughout the ¶ world; and eventually the U.S. will “forget and forgive,” and ¶ reward him with tourism, investments, and economic aid.

#### Imperialist policies towards Cuba aren’t the problem- it’s the Castro regime that strips Cubans of their basic freedoms

[Mark Finkelstein](http://newsbusters.org/users/mark-finkelstein) [Mark Finkelstein is a NewsBusters Senior Contributor]¶ May 01, 2007 ¶ Andrea Mitchell: Cuba's Only Major Problem is U.S. Embargo¶ <http://newsbusters.org/node/12436>

There's really only one problem for Cuba: those yanqui imperialists and the embargo they slapped on the country. Just ask Andrea Mitchell. The NBC correspondent is in Cuba today for the May Day festivities. Here's an excerpt from her conversation on MSNBC at 9:07 EDT this morning with host Contessa Brewer. ¶ MSNBC HOST CONTESSA BREWER: Is there an expectation among the crowd there, a sense that Castro will return to power at some point? NBC CORRESPONDENT ANDREA MITCHELL: Officials are pointing out, and it's certainly true from my visits here that the government runs, it's business as usual, that they have managed this succession rather well. Raul Castro is here today, he and other leaders are very much in charge. There have been no major problems, other than the continuing economic difficulties that of course this country faces because of the U.S. embargo, the economic embargo.¶ Yes, if only that darn embargo were lifted, communism could work its wonders. True, Cuba is already free to trade with all the 191 other countries in the world. But it's the U.S. embargo alone that is preventing Cuba from becoming a miracle of economic expansion. I have no doubt that if the embargo were lifted, in no time you would see standards of living rivaling those of, say, Bulgaria circa 1959. Oh, and I suppose some of you kill-joys are going to point out that, beyond the embargo, the Cuban people also suffer from an oppressive totalitarian government that robs them of political and human rights. Yeah, well, altogether now: but they have free health care! Thanks for some solid reporting, Andrea, on the sinister influence that is the United States. Viva Fidel! Viva la Revolucion! Abajo los imperialistas!

### 1NC 2 Ext – Impact Turn Strategy

#### American imperialism is unique, generic criticism of past imperial powers isn’t responsive- US empire promotes better quality of life

Michael Ignatieff [director of the Carr Center at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University] "THE AMERICAN EMPIRE (GET USED TO IT)." THE NEW YORK TIMES. JANUARY 6, 2003.

http://www.wehaitians.com/the%20american%20empire.html

America's empire is not like empires of times past, built on colonies, conquest and the white man's burden. We are no longer in the era of the United Fruit Company, when American corporations needed the Marines to secure their investments overseas. The 21st century imperium is a new invention in the annals of political science, an empire lite, a global hegemony whose grace notes are free markets, human rights and democracy, enforced by the most awesome military power the world has ever known. It is the imperialism of a people who remember that their country secured its independence by revolt against an empire, and who like to think of themselves as the friend of freedom everywhere. 11-1- an empire without consciousness of itself as such, constantly shocked that its good intentions arouse resentment abroad. But that does not make it any less of an empire, with a conviction t at it a one in • erman Melville's words bears "the ark of the liberties of the world.'

#### It is the failure to imperialize that allows genocide to occur

Max Boot, 2004 (Senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "In Modern Imperialism, U.S. Needs to Walk Softly" Los Angeles Times, July 15. p B 13. Proquest)

But whatever happens in Iraq, there will continue to be strong demand for U.S. interventions around the world. Failed states and rogue states constitute the biggest threats to world peace in the foreseeable future, and only the United States has the will and the resources to do anything about them. Even many of those who detested the invasion of Iraq plead for the U.S. to bring order to places like Darfur, a province in Sudan where genocide is occurring, The U.S. cannot shrug off the burden of global leadership, at least not without catastrophic cost to the entire world. but it can exercise its power more wisely than it did in Iraq over the past year.

#### So called American imperialism can be used to fight the worst most oppressive forms of empire

Robert Kaufman [professor of public policy at the Pepperdine School of Public Policy] In Defense Of The Bush Doctrine. Pg. 66 [book] 2007

The issue is not whether a broad coalition is desirable, but when and in what circumstances its maintenance should take precedence over the need for decisive action. Nor is the issue whether legitimacy is an important criterion for American foreign policy. Benign is the key word in Josef Joffe's apt description of American hegemony.12 Niall Ferguson and others have wrongly branded the United States as an imperial power." Richard Cooper knows better. As he observes perceptively, the United States has been consciously anti-imperial for most of American history: True, it has interfered relentlessly in Central America, acquired territory by force (as well as by purchase), and it was caught up in-the imperial frenzy at the end of the nineteenth century; but it was also one of the first to give up its colonies. It then did its best to ensure that the British and French Empires were dismantled. The United States is founded on ideals and its vocation is the spread of those ideals. Although the United States has more troops deployed abroad than Britain at the height of its imperial glory, they are not used for the same purpose. Typically, they are used to de–fend America's allies. . . . Usually they arrive at a time of conflict, but stay on to ensure security and perhaps to strengthen the forces of good government the two are sometimes related thereafter. This often turns out to be a long business:4

### 1NC 3 Ext – Embargo Good

#### Embargo is key to political and economic freedom negotiations

**Vidal 2013** (William Vidal, 2-26-13, “What if the US Ended the Cuba Travel Ban and the Embargo”, <http://ontwoshores.com/?p=1785>)

Cuba does not have an independent/transparent legal system. All judges are appointed by the State and all lawyers are licensed by the State. In the last few years, European investors have had over $1 billion arbitrarily frozen by the government and several investments have been confiscated. Cuba’s Law 77 allows the State to expropriate foreign-invested assets for reason of “public utility” or “social interest.” In the last year, the CEOs of three companies with extensive dealings with the Cuban government were arrested without charges. OTS: Again, U.S. companies can look out for their interests… well, you get the gist, even if Suchlicki doesn’t. Conclusions - If the travel ban is lifted unilaterally now or the embargo is ended by the U.S., what will the U.S. government have to negotiate with a future regime in Cuba and to encourage changes in the island? These policies could be an important bargaining chip with a future regime willing to provide concessions in the area of political and economic freedoms.

### 1NC 4 Ext – A2 Ethics

#### Allowing the avoidable death of people through nuclear war you deny that group of people the ability to affirm life the way they want to

Lawrence **Hateb** (Professor & Chair Philosophy and Religious Studies, Old Dominion University) **1995** “A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy” p. 152-3

Nietzsche is willing to offer judgements against weak, life-denying perspectives and in favor of strong, life-affirming perspectives. Nevertheless, Nietzsche also indicates that overall evaluations of life cannot be given any veridical status, since they stem from perspectival interests. “Judgements, judgements of value, concerning life, for it or against it, can, in the end, never be true: they have value only as symptoms, they are worthy of consideration only as symptoms: in themselves such judgements are stupidities. One must by all means stretch out one’s fingers and attempt to grasp this amazing finesse, that the value of life cannot be estimated. Evaluations of life, then are local estimations that serve the interest of a certain perspective but that cannot stand as a global measure to cancel out other estimations. This would not be inconsistent with Nietzsche’s texts although he vigorously opposes what he calls the perspectives of the weak, nevertheless these perspectives have their authenticity, according to Nietzsche. Life denying perspectives serve the interests of certain types of life, who have been able to cultivate their own forms of power that have had an enormous effect upon the world. In order to make headway here, we have to distinguish between life affirmation and life enhancement. According to Nietzsche, even life-denying perspectives are life-enhancing, since they further the interests of weak forms of life. Different forms of life are continually affirming their own perspective on life; their cultural productions, even if animated by other worldy projections, express their local affirmative posture. Even philosophical pessimism is affirmative in this sense. Schopenhaurer’s elaborate philosophical output on behalf of pessimism was in effect an affirmation of a pessimistic life, in part as a vigorous – and stimulating – condemnation of optimism. Short of the practical nihilism of suicide, all forms of human life seek to will their meaning, even if that meaning is a conviction about the meaninglessness of life. As Nietzsche says, “man would rather will nothingness than no will”. Nietzsche does have a “global” philosophical position, namely perspectivism, in the sense that the life-world is a field of perspectives, each willing their own life interests; as perspectives if a field of becoming, however, none can pose as the “truth”. Nothing here would forbid Nietzsche from making judgements about perspectives that he thinks are deficient estimations of life. Morality is merely an interpretation of certain phenomena – more precisely, misinterpretation (missdeutung). Moral judgements, like religious ones, belong to a stage of ignorance at which the very concept of the real and the distinction between what is real and imaginary, are still lacking. Since, as we have seen, overall estimations of life can have no veridical status, Nietzsche’s critique cannot amount to a project of refutation or erasure, but rather a “plea by an interested party” The promotion of life-affirmation over life-denial should be taken as Nietzsche’s perspective, as a battle that he is willing to wage, as a commitment that involves an existential decision rather than a search for justification. In this way other perspectives can have their place, in their service to the interest of different types of life “This is my way: where is yours? – thus I answered those who asked me “the way”. For the way – that does not exist

### 1NC 5 Ext - Impact Framing

#### Consequentiallism key to progressivism – their moralism guarantees alienating potential allies and makes progressive reform impossible

Isaac, 2002

(Jeffrey C., James H. Rudy professor of Political Science and director of the Center for the Study of Democracy and Public Life at Indiana University, Bloomington, “Ends, Means and politics,” *Dissent*, Spring)

But what is absent is a sober reckoning with the preoccupations and opinions of the vast majority of Americans, who are not drawn to vocal denunciations of the International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization and who do not believe that the discourse of “anti-imperialism” speaks to their lives. Equally absent is critical thinking about why citizens of liberal democratic states—including most workers and the poor—value liberal democracy and subscribe to what Jürgen Habermas has called “constitutional patriotism”: a patriotic identification with the democratic state because of the civil, political, and social rights it defends. Vicarious identifications with Subcommandante Marcos or starving Iraqi children allow left activists to express a genuine solidarity with the oppressed elsewhere that is surely legitimate in a globalizing age. But these symbolic avowals are not an effective way of contending for political influence or power in the society in which these activists live. The ease with which the campus left responded to September 11 by rehearsing an alltoo- familiar narrative of American militarism and imperialism is not simply disturbing. It is a sign of this left’s alienation from the society in which it operates (the worst examples of this are statements of the Student Peace Action Coalition Network, which declare that “the United States Government is the world’s greatest terror organization,” and suggest that “homicidal psychopaths of the United States Government” engineered the World Trade Center attacks as a pretext for imperialist aggression. See http://www.gospan.org). Many left activists seem more able to identify with (idealized versions of) Iraqi or Afghan civilians than with American citizens, whether these are the people who perished in the Twin Towers or the rest of us who legitimately fear that we might be next. This is not because of any “disloyalty.” Charges like that lack intellectual or political merit. It is because of a debilitating moralism; because it is easier to denounce wrong than to take real responsibility for correcting it, easier to locate and to oppose a remote evil than to address a proximate difficulty. The campus left says what it thinks. But it exhibits little interest in how and why so many Americans think differently. The “peace” demonstrations organized across the country within a few days of the September 11 attacks—in which local Green Party activists often played a crucial role—were, whatever else they were, a sign of their organizers’ lack of judgment and common sense. Although they often expressed genuine horror about the terrorism, they focused their energy not on the legitimate fear and outrage of American citizens but rather on the evils of the American government and its widely supported response to the terror. Hardly anyone was paying attention, but they alienated anyone who was. This was utterly predictable. And that is my point. The predictable consequences did not matter. What mattered was simply the expression of righteous indignation about what is wrong with the United States, as if September 11 hadn’t really happened. Whatever one thinks about America’s deficiencies, it must be acknowledged that a political praxis preoccupation with this is foolish and self-defeating. The other, more serious consequence of this moralizing tendency is the failure to think seriously about global *politics*. The campus left is rightly interested in the ills of global capitalism. But politically it seems limited to two options: expressions of “solidarity” with certain oppressed groups—Palestinians but not Syrians, Afghan civilians (though not those who welcome liberation from the Taliban), but not Bosnians or Kosovars or Rwandans—and automatic opposition to American foreign policy in the name of anti-imperialism. The economic discourse of the campus left is a universalist discourse of human needs and workers rights; but it is accompanied by a refusal to think in political terms about the realities of states, international institutions, violence, and power. This refusal is linked to a peculiar strain of pacifism, according to which any use of military force by the United States is viewed as aggression or militarism.

## Hardliners DA

### 1NC Hardliners DA

#### Sanctions are marked as failure of hardliners – removing it provides clout for the totalitarian model

Bandow 2012 (Doug Bandow, Doug Bandow is a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute. A former Special Assistant to President Ronald Reagan, he is the author of several books, including Foreign Follies: America's New Global Empire, 12-11-12, “Time to End Cuba Embargo”, nationalinterest.org/commentary/the-pointless-cuba-embargo-7834

Cuban human rights activists also gen erally oppose sanctions. A decade ago I (legally) visited Havana, where I met Elizardo Sanchez Santa Cruz, who suffered in communist prisons for eight years. He told me that the "sanctions policy gives the government a good alibi to justify the failure of the totalitarian model in Cuba." Indeed, it is only by posing as an opponent of Yanqui Imperialism that Fidel Castro has achieved an international reputation. If he had been ignored by Washington, he never would have been anything other than an obscure authoritarian windbag. Unfortunately, embargo supporters never let reality get in the way of their arguments. In 1994, John Sweeney of the Heritage Foundation declared that “the embargo remains the only effective instrument available to the U.S. government in trying to force the economic and democratic concessions it has been demanding of Castro for over three decades. Maintaining the embargo will help end the Castro regime more quickly.” The latter’s collapse, he wrote, is more likely in the near term than ever before. Almost two decades later, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairwoman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, retains faith in the embargo: “The sanctions on the regime must remain in place and, in fact, should be strengthened, and not be altered.” One of the best definitions of insanity is continuing to do the same thing while expecting to achieve different results. The embargo survives largely because of Florida’s political importance. Every presidential candidate wants to win the Sunshine State’s electoral votes, and the Cuban American community is a significant voting bloc.

#### Turns the aff - democracy improves lives of citizens: (1) decreases corruption; (2) fosters human rights; (3) boosts economy

Minxin Pei, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, “Implementing the Institutions of Democracy,” INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ON WORLD PEACE v. 19 n. 4, December **20**02, p. 3+.

The establishment of democratic institutions may also produce practical benefits for the countries that adopt them. Such benefits may come in various forms, such as less corruption in government, better protection of human rights, and greater economic prosperity. The work by Amartya Sen has made a powerful case that political rights protected under democratic institutions can drastically improve the well-being of average citizens. (19) The argument that democratic governance, which fosters political competition and public participation in the political process, should help contain corruption seems quite persuasive. The world's most corrupt regimes in recent years, which include Marcos in the Philippines, the Duvaliers in Haiti, Mobutu regime in the former Zaire, and Suharto in Indonesia, were all dictatorships that had degenerated into kleptocracies. Theory and evidence both support the view that democracies, which have by definition real opposition forces, organized civil society groups, and a watchful press , are unlikely to allow such predatory regimes to survive for so long and plunder their countries so thoroughly. Researchers who have used extensive data to analyze various factors that may contribute to or curb corruption conclude that civil liberties and their institutional manifestations (such as a free press and vigorous civil society) play an important role in explaining the variations in the degree of corruption across nations: countries with higher degrees of civil liberties are found to have less corrupt government. (20) Of course, there are significant variations in the level of good governance achieved by democracies across countries. Generally speaking, however, established democratic regimes are perceived to be less corrupt than newly democratized ones. (21)

### 2NC Link Exts – Emboldens Hardliners/Crushes Reformers

#### Removing sanctions funds hardliners iron grip over the peoples

**Cuba Standard 2012** (6-25-12, “Cuban American Corporate Execs Urge to Stay Hardline”, <http://www.cubastandard.com/2012/06/25/cuban-american-corporate-execs-urge-to-stay-hardline/>)

Calling Cuba’s economic reforms “cosmetic,” 15 mostly Cuban American corporate executives urged the United States to maintain a hard line against the Cuban government. In their letter, titled “commitment to freedom” and datelined Washington, the signers reject any business ties with Cuba. “We … wish to convey our great concern regarding the Castro regime’s deceptive campaign aimed at securing much-needed financial resources to prolong its iron grip over the people of Cuba,” the document says. Reconciliation efforts with Cuban émigrés by the Cuban government and Catholic Church are a “smokescreen,” the signees contend.

#### Sanctions are key to constrain hardliners

**Democracy Digest 2012** (11-20-12, “Dissidents Pushing Demand for Another Cuba”, http://www.demdigest.net/blog/2012/11/dissidents-pushing-demand-for-another-cuba/)

“The sanctions on the regime must remain in place and, in fact, should be strengthened, and not be altered,” says Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. “Responsible nations must not buy into the facade the dictatorship is trying to create by announcing ‘reforms’ while, in reality, it’s tightening its grip on its people.” While Raúl “has a freer hand to advance needed economic reforms, and possibly even to seek improved relations with the United States,” notes one observer, “he has only cautiously departed from the sacred Fidelista policies of the past, constrained by hard liners devoted to his brother and by corruption and bureaucratic intransigence.”

### 2NC Impact Exts – Turns the Aff

#### Sanctions enable cooperation and benefits reformer efforts

CBC 2012 (Capitol Hill Cubans, June 25, 2012, “Commitment to Freedom,” <http://cubanexilequarter.blogspot.com/2012/06/commitment-to-freedom.html>)

Furthermore looking beyond Cuba to China, Vietnam and Burma one is presented with a cautionary tale on lifting sanctions unconditionally. In China and Vietnam the United States lifted sanctions unconditionally and have de-linked human rights considerations from economic considerations. The result has been a deterioration of human rights standards in both countries. On the other hand in Burma where sanctions were maintained the military junta, after years of trying to manipulate its way out from under them has had to recognize the political opposition and provide a space for them in Burma's parliament. Things are still far from perfect but there is hope that serious and permanent reforms are underway. The ability of Aung San Suu Kyi to travel in and out of her country and run for public office is a positive sign. The ability for an independent press to begin to operate in Burma following decades of systematic censorship and control is another positive sign. Aung San Suu Kyi has been clear about the importance of sanctions and of confronting those that would engage the dictatorship of Burma at the expense of the human rights of the Burmese people: Investment that only goes to enrich an already wealthy elite bent on monopolizing both economic and political power cannot contribute toward égalité and justice — the foundation stones for a sound democracy. I would therefore like to call upon those who have an interest in expanding their capacity for promoting intellectual freedom and humanitarian ideals to take a principled stand against companies that are doing business with the Burmese military regime. Please use your liberty to promote ours.What have we witnessed in Cuba over the past four years? The death under suspicious circumstances of national opposition figures such as Laura Inés Pollán Toledo on October 14, 2011 and Oswaldo José Payá Sardiñas on July 22, 2012. Increased violence and detentions of nonviolent activists. An American citizen arrested and sentenced to 15 years in a Cuban prison for attempting to provide internet access to the local Jewish community in Cuba. The Obama Administration has continued its policy of extending a hand to the Cuban regime and has little to show for it except more repression and the deaths of high profile activists. There is no reason to suppose that further unilateral concessions will lead to a different outcome.

#### Authoritarian regimes are ruled by force--apply this to their external relations, making them more aggressive

Rudolph J. **Rummel**, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, University of Hawaii, “Chapter 7: Freedom is a Solution to War,” SAVING LIVES, ENRICHING LIFE: FREEDOM AS A RIGHT AND A MORAL GOOD, 20**01**. Available from the World Wide Web at: [<http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/WF.CHAP7.HTM>](http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/MTF.CHAP9.HTM).

Then why do nondemocracies--or rather, the dictators who control them, since by definition the people have little to say--make war on each other? Do not they see each other as of the same kind, sharing the same coercive culture? Yes, and that is exactly the problem for them. They live by coercion and force. Their guns keep them in power. They depend on a controlled populace manipulated through propaganda, deceit, and terror. Commands and decrees are the working routine of dictators; negotiations are a battleground in which one wins through lies, subterfuge, misinformation, stalling, and manipulation. A dictator's international relations are no different. They see them as war fought by other means. They will only truly negotiate in the face of bigger and better guns, and they will only keep to their promises as long as these guns remain pointed at them. This is also how one dictator sees another--and, incidentally, how they see democracies. This is not to say that war necessarily will happen between two countries if one or both is not democratic. They may be too far away from each other, too weak, or too inhibited by the greater power of a third country. It is only to say that the governments of such countries lack the social and cultural inhibitions that would prevent armed conflict between them, and that their dictatorial governments inherently encourage war. War may not happen, but it can, and the more undemocratic the governments, the more likely it will.

### A2 no uniqueness- embargo gives power for crackdowns

#### Crackdowns on reformers high now

**Democracy Digest 2012** (11-20-12, “Dissidents Pushing Demand for Another Cuba”, http://www.demdigest.net/blog/2012/11/dissidents-pushing-demand-for-another-cuba/)

Despite the fierce repression of political dissent and a culture of fear in which ordinary people and independent-thinking Cubans are afraid to speak up, a wide spectrum of organizations and individuals continue to advance democracy and human rights at great personal risk. Pro-democracy activists are routinely [imprisoned, detained, denied or dismissed](http://www.demdigest.net/blog/2012/01/dissidents-death-part-of-larger-wave-of-repression-in-cuba/) from employment, and otherwise harassed. Under a “dangerousness” provision in Cuba’s penal code, the state can imprison individuals on suspicion that they may commit a crime in the future.

### A2 aff solves – aids reformers

#### Lifting restrictions on sanctions doesn’t aid reformers – empirically denied

CBC 2012 (Capitol Hill Cubans, June 25, 2012, “Commitment to Freedom,” <http://cubanexilequarter.blogspot.com/2012/06/commitment-to-freedom.html>)

The thesis put forth by Mr. Saladrigas is that lifting sanctions would weaken and dissuade hardliners while helping reformers. Over the past four years the Obama Administration has loosened economic sanctions in Cuba. If Mr. Saladrigas's argument is correct then one should see that reformist elements in the regime are asserting themselves and winning policy discussions. That has not been the case. On the human rights front the situation has deteriorated.

#### Lifting restrictions on sanctions doesn’t aid reformers – empirically denied

**Democracy Digest 2012** (11-20-12, “Dissidents Pushing Demand for Another Cuba”, http://www.demdigest.net/blog/2012/11/dissidents-pushing-demand-for-another-cuba/)

Any easing would be a gamble. Free enterprise may not necessarily lead to the embargo’s goal of free elections, especially because Cuba has said it wants to replicate the paths of Vietnam and China, where the loosening of economic restrictions has not led to political change. Indeed, Cuban officials have become adept at using previous American efforts to soften the embargo to their advantage, taking a cut of dollars converted into pesos and marking up the prices at state-owned stores.

## Terrorism DA

### 1NC Terrorism DA

#### Cuba remains a terrorism threat – poses direct threat to national security

Ros-Lehtinen, 5-1-13 (Leana Ros-Lehtinen, FL-27 Congresswoman, <http://ros-lehtinen.house.gov/press-release/no-change-cuba%E2%80%99s-designation-state-sponsor-terrorism-reaffirms-threat-posed-castro>)

No Change in Cuba’s Designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism Reaffirms the Threat Posed by the Castro Regime, Says Ros-Lehtinen. Ileana also calls for North Korea to be re-designated as a State Sponsor of Terror “Cuba also continues to operate its vast spy network within the United States, posing a direct threat to our national security” (WASHINGTON) –U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, made the following statement on the State Department’s recommendation to not change Cuba status on the State Sponsors of Terrorism (SST) list. Statement by Ros-Lehtinen: “The State Department’s announcement yesterday that it intends to keep Cuba on the State Sponsor of Terrorism (SST) list reaffirms that the Castro regime is, and has always been, a supporter and facilitator of terrorism. The unlawful actions against our nation include the Castro regime’s order of the Brothers to the Rescue shootdown in 1996 which caused the deaths of U.S. citizens over international waters. “The Cuban tyranny continues to undermine our interests at every turn and provides a safe haven for members of terrorist organizations like the FARC and ETA. The Castro brothers have long been collaborators with fellow SST members Iran and Syria, and Cuba acts as a sanctuary for fugitives from our country, including Joanne Chesimard wanted for the murder of a New Jersey State Trooper. Cuba also continues to operate its vast spy network within the United States, posing a direct threat to our national security.

**Strong sanctions are necessary to squander terrorist efforts in Cuba**

**Bustillo 5-9-13** (Mitchell Bustillo, Hispanic Heritage Foundation Gold Medallion Winner, and a former United States Senate Page, appointed by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, International Policy Digest, “Time to Strengthen the Cuban Embargo”, <http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2013/05/09/time-to-strengthen-the-cuban-embargo/>)

According to U.S. Senator Robert Menendez, “Tourism to Cuba is a natural resource, akin to providing refined petroleum products to Iran. It’s reported that 2.5 million tourists visit Cuba – 1.5 million from North America…1 million Canadians…More than 170,000 from England…More than 400,000 from Spain, Italy, Germany, and France combined – All bringing in $1.9 billion in revenue to the Castro regime.” This behavior undermines the embargo, which is why the U.S. should urge other nations to adopt similar policies toward Cuba. A strong and unyielding embargo, supported by the U.S. and its allies, is necessary to incite political change. Furthermore, Sen. Menendez argues, “Those who lament our dependence on foreign oil because it enriches regimes in terrorist states like Iran, should not have a double standard when it comes to enriching a brutal dictatorship like Cuba right here in our own backyard.” If the policy of the U.S. is to challenge these behaviors, then it must also stand up to Cuba. It would be a disservice to squander the progress of the past 50 years when opportunity is looming.

Terrorism escalates via counter attacks and kills billions

**Sid-Ahmed 2004** (Mohamed, staff writer, Al-Ahram, Sept. 1, issue number 705, “Extinction!”, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/705/op5.htm>)

We have reached a point in human history where the phenomenon of terrorism has to be completely uprooted, not through persecution and oppression, but by removing the reasons that make particular sections of the world population resort to terrorism. This means that fundamental changes must be brought to the world system itself. The phenomenon of terrorism is even more dangerous than is generally believed. We are in for surprises no less serious than 9/11 and with far more devastating consequences. A nuclear attack by terrorists will be much more critical than Hiroshima and Nagazaki, even if -- and this is far from certain -- the weapons used are less harmful than those used then, Japan, at the time, with no knowledge of nuclear technology, had no choice but to capitulate. Today, the technology is a secret for nobody. So far, except for the two bombs dropped on Japan, nuclear weapons have been used only to threaten. Now we are at a stage where they can be detonated. This completely changes the rules of the game. We have reached a point where anticipatory measures can determine the course of events. Allegations of a terrorist connection can be used to justify anticipatory measures, including the invasion of a sovereign state like Iraq. As it turned out, these allegations, as well as the allegation that Saddam was harboring WMD, proved to be unfounded. What would be the consequences of a nuclear attack by terrorists? Even if it fails, it would further exacerbate the negative features of the new and frightening world in which we are now living. Societies would close in on themselves, police measures would be stepped up at the expense of human rights, tensions between civilizations and religions would rise and ethnic conflicts would proliferate. It would also speed up the arms race and develop the awareness that a different type of world order is imperative if humankind is to survive. But the still more critical scenario is if the attack succeeds. This could lead to a third world war, from which no one will emerge victorious. Unlike a conventional war which ends when one side triumphs over another, this war will be without winners and losers. When nuclear pollution infects the whole planet, we will all be losers.

### 2NC Link Exts

#### Sanctions are a useful pressure in Obama’s counterterror efforts

Taylor 5-26-13 (Andrew Taylor, “Obama Counterterrorism Strategy Slammed by Republicans, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/26/obama-counterterrorism_n_3339860.html>)

Obama ally Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., said that "having transparency, having rules and engaging other activities other than military to help curb the war on terror – diplomacy, economic sanctions and things like that – is going to be useful as well. So I think the president did a very, very smart pivot, realizing we're not going to let up on terrorists, but at the same time we're going to meet the changes in the world."

**Sanctions are an example of political courage to fight terrorism in Cuba**

**Radelat 2012** (Summer 2012, Latino Magazine, “Cuban Standoff,” <http://www.latinomagazine.com/summer12/features/cuba.htm>)

Once again, the move brought blistering criticism from a Cuban-American lawmaker. “The administration must stop bending over backwards to accommodate the needs, whims, and requests of this state sponsor of terrorism that, again, is located just 90 miles from U.S. shores,” said Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla. Sabatini said Obama administration efforts to improve relations right now “would take political courage, which so far appears to be lacking.” Cuba is also mired in a political quagmire. It has made modest economic reforms, expanded self-employment, liberalized rules for family-run restaurants, gave Cuban farmers more flexibility to sell their products, and created fledgling real estate markets in big cities such as Havana and Santiago. Sabatini said Cuba’s modest economic reforms have “let the genie out of the bottle. ...They can’t go back but that doesn’t mean they’ll go forward. The Cuban government’s ability to stagnate is outstanding, but now it’s almost fermenting.” The Cuban government hasn’t been able to move forward on larger economic reforms, including a plan to lay off thousands of state workers. It hoped the newly unemployed workers would, in a controlled manner, boost Cuba’s tiny private sector.

### 2NC Impact Exts

#### ****A nuclear terror attack causes miscalculation and nuclear war****

Speice 2006 **(Patrick, J.D. Candidate 2006, Marshall-Wythe School of Law, College of William and Mary, “NEGLIGENCE AND NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION: ELIMINATING THE CURRENT LIABILITY BARRIER TO BILATERAL U.S.-RUSSIAN NONPROLIFERATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS,” William & Mary Law Review, Feb, l/n)**

The potential consequences of the unchecked spread of nuclear knowledge and material to terrorist groups that seek to cause mass destruction in the United States are truly horrifying. A terrorist attack with a nuclear weapon would be devastating in terms of immediate human and economic losses. 49 Moreover, there would be immense political pressure in the United States to discover the perpetrators and retaliate with nuclear weapons, massively increasing the number of casualties and potentially triggering a full-scale nuclear conflict. 50 In addition to the threat posed by terrorists, leakage of nuclear knowledge and material from Russia will reduce the barriers that states with nuclear ambitions face and may trigger widespread proliferation of nuclear weapons. 51 This proliferation will increase the risk of nuclear attacks against the United States [\*1440] or its allies by hostile states, 52 as well as increase the likelihood that regional conflicts will draw in the United States and escalate to the use of nuclear weapons. 53

### A2 Removing Sanctions Solves

#### Terrorism is a threat in Cuba despite Obama’s counterterrorism promises – suspects and open prison

Taylor 5-26-13 (Andrew Taylor, “Obama Counterterrorism Strategy Slammed by Republicans, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/26/obama-counterterrorism_n_3339860.html>)

WASHINGTON -- Republicans keep slamming President Barack Obama's push to move the government away from a war footing and refine and recalibrate counterterrorism strategy. Capitol Hill Republicans like Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina say Obama is projecting weakness at a time when the United States needs to show resolve against terror networks like al-Qaida. The South Carolina Republican said Sunday that "at a time when we need resolve the most, we're sounding retreat." Obama gave a major speech Thursday in which he said al-Qaida is "on the path to defeat" and he's signaling that he's reluctant to commit troops overseas to conflicts like Syria or other countries struggling with instability in the uncertain aftermath of the Arab Spring. He's also modifying policies on the use of unmanned drone aircraft to try to limit civilian casualties and is redoubling his longstanding – but so far unfulfilled – promise to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where many terrorism suspects are being held without formal charges. Obama is trying to recast the image of terrorists from enemy warriors to cowardly thugs and move the United States away a state of perpetual war. But Graham said Obama is displaying a "lack of resolve" despite a slew of concerns in the Middle East, including civil war and chemical weapons in Syria and threats to Israel from Syria's unrest and Iran's nuclear program. "We show this lack of resolve, talking about the war being over," Graham said. "What do you think the Iranians are thinking? At the end of the day, this is the most tone-deaf president I ever could imagine." "I see a big difference between the president saying the war's at an end and whether or not you've won the war," said Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla. "We can claim that it's at an end, but this war's going to continue. And we have still tremendous threats out there, that are building, not declining, building, and to not recognize that, I think, is dangerous in the long run and dangerous for the world."

## Democracy Transition DA

#### Democratic reforms coming now- loosening of restrictions and economic liberalization

Ted Piccone [Senior Fellow and Deputy Director, Foreign Policy] March 18, 2013 Time to Bet on Cubahttp://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/03/18-cuba-piccone¶

Cuba’s efforts to “update” its socialist system through a series of economic reforms just got more complicated. The death of Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez, its principal benefactor, could seriously disrupt what is already a precarious process of maintaining top-down political control while liberalizing elements of the economy. Raúl Castro’s announcement that he will step down in five years and the emergence of younger leaders born after the 1959 revolution add further uncertainty to the island’s future.¶ These new circumstances offer President Obama a rare opportunity to turn the page of history from an outdated Cold War approach to Cuba to a new era of constructive engagement. In his second term in office, he should place a big bet by investing political capital in defrosting relations, an approach that will advance U.S. interests in a stable, prosperous and democratic Cuba.¶ Under Castro, the Cuban government has undertaken important reforms to modernize and liberalize the economy. Cubans are now permitted to buy and sell property, open their own businesses, hire employees and enter into co-ops, with state-owned enterprises on a more equal footing. The updating of the Soviet-style economic system is a gradual and highly controlled process. But the recent legal emergence of formal, small-scale private businesses (cuentapropistas) that can now compete on a more equal footing with state-owned enterprises opens a window into a profound shift in thinking already under way on the island. The reforms also offer new opportunities for U.S. engagement.¶ Castro’s loosening of the apron strings extends beyond the economy. In January, the Cuban government lifted exit controls for most citizens, which is likely to accelerate the process of reconciliation within the Cuban diaspora. It could also result in a swift uptick of Cubans departing for the United States, demanding a reconsideration of U.S. migration policy to manage the increase. The gradual handoff of power to a next generation of more pragmatic party and military leaders who will determine the pace and scope of the reform process is yet further evidence that the Castro generation is looking forward to securing a viable legacy.

## Politics

### Link – Costs Political Capital

#### Removing the embargo is a political battle that would use up Obama’s capital

Williams 5-3-13 (Carol J. Williams, LA Times foreign correspondent for 25 years, Carol J. Williams traveled to and reported from more than 80 countries in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America., “Political Calculus Keeps Cuba on US Terror List”, http://www.latimes.com/news/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-cuba-us-terror-list-20130502,0,2494970.story)

There was talk early in Obama’s first term of easing the 51-year-old embargo, and Kerry, though still in the Senate then, wrote a [commentary](http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/columns/open-cuba-to-us-travelers/1057098) for the Tampa Bay Tribune in 2009 in which he deemed the security threat from Cuba “a faint shadow.”  He called then for freer travel between the two countries and an end to the U.S. policy of isolating Cuba “that has manifestly failed for nearly 50 years.” The political clout of the Cuban American community in South Florida and more recently Havana’s refusal to release Gross have kept any warming between the Cold War adversaries at bay. It’s a matter of political priorities and trade-offs, Aramesh said. He noted that former Secretary of State [Hillary Rodham Clinton](http://www.latimes.com/topic/politics/government/hillary-clinton-PEPLT007433.topic) last year exercised her discretion to get the Iranian opposition group Mujahedeen Khalq, or MEK, removed from the government’s list of designated terrorist organizations. That move was motivated by the hopes of some in Congress that the group could be aided and encouraged to eventually challenge the Tehran regime. “It’s a question of how much political cost you want to incur or how much political capital you want to spend,” Aramesh said. “President Obama has decided not to reach out to Cuba, that he has more important foreign policy battles elsewhere.”

#### The plan saps political capital- the embargo is complex and policy makers are busy

**Schoultz 2010** (Lars Schoultz is the William Rand Kenan Jr. Professor of Political Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “ Benevolent Domination,” Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Cuban Studies, Volume 41, Project Muse).

The best way to begin—but only begin—to explain U.S. policy toward revolutionary Cuba is not with this ideology, but with a frank recognition that senior U.S. officials are extremely busy, all but overwhelmed by an endless array of pressing issues, some of them matters of life and death; it would take both time and political capital to terminate today's complex embargo that has been cobbled together over half a century. Then, after acknowledging the importance of inertia, the next step is to observe that the United States has important interests to protect in Latin America, and the estrangement that began a half century ago was largely a response to the Cuban government's reluctance to address these interests to Washington's satisfaction. Correctly or incorrectly, wisely or unwisely, the United States came to perceive Cuba's revolutionary government as a threat to its interests.

### Link - Plan Unpopular

#### Support collapsing for the embargo now

[Ted Piccone](http://www.brookings.edu/experts/picconet) [Senior Fellow and Deputy Director, [Foreign Policy](http://www.brookings.edu/about/programs/foreign-policy)]¶ MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT | January 17, 2013¶ Opening to Havana¶ <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2013/01/opening-to-havana>

As a result of your actions and changing demographics, families are more readily reuniting across the Florida straits, opening new channels of commerce and communication that are encouraging reconciliation among Cuban-Americans and a more general reframing of how best to support the Cuban people. Cuba’s recent decision to lift exit controls for most Cubans on the island is likely to accelerate this process of reconciliation within the Cuban diaspora, thereby softening support for counterproductive tactics like the embargo. The new travel rules also require a re-think of the outdated U.S. migration policy in order to manage a potential spike in departures from the island to the United States. For example, the team handling your immigration reform bill should be charged with devising proposals to reduce the special privileges afforded Cubans who make it to U.S. soil.

### Link – Plan Partisan

#### Plan is a contentious issue – history and the pro-embargo lobby

**Guzman 5-8-13** (Sandra Guzmán is an award winning journalist, blogger, media consultant, and author of, "The New Latina's Bible: The Modern Latina's Guide to Love, Spirituality, Family & La Vida." “Jay-Z and Beyoncé's trip to Cuba isn't the problem, the embargo is”, http://www.cnn.com/2013/05/07/opinion/guzman-beyonce-jay-z-cuba)

It's 2013 and we need to debate Cuban policy earnestly. Members of Congress must stop the cowardice around the issue and stop humoring the delusions of passionate folks stuck in the 1960s for political votes and favor. The pro-embargo folks are ignoring the policy's epic failure and fail to recognize that U.S. policy has played into the hands of the Castro brothers, who have sinisterly used it to make the case to their people that if Cuba is starving and the island economy can't grow, it's because of this U.S. policy. In 1995, I won an Emmy for producing a show that explored the Cuban embargo. What was special about the program, "Embargo Contra Cuba," was that it gave an opportunity for the many different opinions in the Cuban debate to be heard. The voices of everyday Cuban families caught in the quagmire of policies that make their family members the "enemy" were allowed to surface. These are the folks -- *cubanos* to the core -- who will tell you, if they had a mic and a safe forum, that the current U.S. policy is stupid. We hardly hear from these normal cubanos and for that matter, other average Americans on this issue. That void is tragic. Cuba policy is steeped in dysfunction on both sides. Last week, the State Department denied Fidel Castro's niece Mariela Castro a visa to travel to Philadelphia to receive an award for her gay activism, no reason given. A State Department official said visa applications are confidential. Fifty-one years into the policy, another Castro is in power and the island is still communist. The U.S. still trades with communist China despite its human rights violations. The U.S. still trades with communist Vietnam. We, the hip-hop generation, see right through the political hypocrisy and we want change.

### Link – Unpopular with GOP

#### Plan sparks massive political battle with GOP

[DAMIEN CAVE](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/damien_cave/index.html) [foreign correspondent for The New York Times, he covers Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.¶ From 2008 to 2010 he served as the Times’ Miami bureau chief, writing on a range of topics] ¶ November 19, 2012¶ Easing of Restraints in Cuba Renews Debate on U.S. Embargo¶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/20/world/americas/changes-in-cuba-create-support-for-easing-embargo.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0>

And Cuba has a long history of tossing ice on warming relations. The latest example is the jailing of Alan Gross, a State Department contractor who has spent nearly three years behind bars for distributing satellite telephone equipment to Jewish groups in Havana.¶ In Washington, Mr. Gross is seen as the main impediment to an easing of the embargo, but there are also limits to what the president could do without Congressional action. The [1992 Cuban Democracy Act](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/cuba/democ_act_1992.html) conditioned the waiving of sanctions on the introduction of democratic changes inside Cuba. The [1996 Helms-Burton Act](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-104publ114/html/PLAW-104publ114.htm) also requires that the embargo remain until Cuba has a transitional or democratically elected government. Obama administration officials say they have not given up, and could move if the president decides to act on his own. Officials say that under the Treasury Department’s licensing and regulation-writing authority, there is room for significant modification. Following the legal logic of Mr. Obama’s changes in 2009, further expansions in travel are possible along with new allowances for investment or imports and exports, especially if narrowly applied to Cuban businesses.¶ Even these adjustments — which could also include travel for all Americans and looser rules for ships engaged in trade with Cuba, according to [a legal analysis](http://www.hoganlovells.com/files/Publication/57d34e80-51b8-4ee0-ae64-750f65ee7642/Preview/PublicationAttachment/55896b90-840a-42bf-8744-752a7a206333/Cuba%20Aritcle%20FINAL.pdf) commissioned by the Cuba Study Group — would probably mean a fierce political fight. The handful of Cuban-Americans in Congress for whom the embargo is sacred oppose looser rules.¶ When asked about Cuban entrepreneurs who are seeking more American support, Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the Florida Republican who is chairwoman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, proposed an even tighter embargo.

### Link – Unpopular with Pro Embargo Lobby

#### Pro embargo lobby is crazy powerful, plan sparks massive controversy- they have economic incentive to keep the embargo in place

SAUL LANDAU and NELSON P. VALDES¶ [Saul Landau, Professor Emeritus, California State University, Pomona,Nelson P. Valdes is Professor Emeritus, University of New Mexico]¶ JANUARY 29, 2013¶ A Boon for Cuban-American Entrepreneurs¶ The Economics of the Cuban Embargo¶ <http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/01/29/the-economics-of-the-cuban-embargo/>

Cuban Americans particularly from south Florida now export goods and remittances to relatives and friends while importing profits from sales made to fellow Cubans in Cuba, giving them an advantage denied to the rest of the country.¶ Washington pundits attribute superhuman strength to the anti-Castro lobby; thus no President would attempt to lift the trade and travel embargoes on the island. Yet, Cuban Americans trade with and travel to Cuba freely on a daily basis. The “embargo” applies to everyone except Cuban Americans.¶ This growing international trade, disguised as sending goods to needy family members in Cuba, now includes filling the hulls on 10 or more daily charter flights from US cities to Cuba. Cuban Americans send goods, often with “mules,” to provide family members in Cuba, needing supplies for their businesses. The “mules” return with cash, derived from sales of these goods. Some of the new Cuban stores and restaurants supplied by Miami-based Cubans make substantial profits, some of which get spent in Cuba, and ends up in Cuba’s central bank.¶ Miami, the United States’ poorest large city, derives income because it provides jobs involved in buying and selling the goods sent to Cuba. Jobs also arise from routine tasks created around the daily charter flights to and from Cuba, and the fees collected from take offs and landings. Add to this, the work for accountants, book-keepers and others.¶ Some unemployed Cuban Americans get jobs as mules transporting the goods and money from one country to the other. Miami banks also benefit.¶ In Cuba, this trade also creates jobs and wealth. Mercedes runs a paladar [private restaurant]in Havana’s Vedado neighborhood, “because we draw tourists who like good food, which I serve at my paladar.”¶ Some paladar customers flew to Havana from Miami. These Cuban Americans come to visit relatives and maybe check on their new investments in Havana family-run businesses. “Relatives in Florida supply me with food I can’t get easily in Cuba,” Mercedes said, “like some spices, and packaged goods. I send them money for these products. They make a profit, and so do I. The government makes money from taxes I pay, and jobs grow in Cuba’s tourist industry.”¶ US-based charter flights have full hulls, even those with few passengers. One charter flight company manager told us: “Passengers don’t matter that much. The hull is totally full.”¶ Much of the Cuba trade flows through the Miami International Airport, meaning capital moves from the US to Cuba; most of the luggage contents, however, remain in Cuba. The boon to Miami airport services means jobs, fees and taxes, which remain as capital in south Florida. The goods purchased in south Florida by Cubans (relatives, mules, etc) benefit local businesses.¶ This trade multiplies jobs throughout the area — as well as it does for Cuba: In Miami sales emanate from stores and lead to jobs in transportation, parking, hotel facilities, restaurants, and luggage-handling. Count the businesses providing services to the people traveling to Cuba and sending goods there. Don’t omit the expanded police force, and extra officials required in immigration, and customs; nor fail to consider jobs servicing air planes, and their jetways, and additional personnel needed for landings and take offs, and extra jobs in airport administration and maintenance created by expanded travel. Think of Miami’s increased tax revenues.¶ South Florida represents a Cuban settler state within the United States. It counters its interests against those of the dominant society, with the society’s ignorant acquiescence. The Miami-based Cuban Americans and their Cuba-based families have used US-Cuba policy, the embargo representing the power of the nation for their own self-interest, and in order to attain a comparative advantage vis a vis the rest of the American population.¶ Since 1960, commitment to overthrow of the Cuban government has functioned as US foreign policy on Cuba, a policy now controlled informally by south Florida Cuban-Americans. The Cuban American ethnic enclave assumed the political power needed to turn south Florida into an autonomous Cuban settler state inside US boundaries, so that the embargo does not get applied to the Cuban American enclave. The enclave barons use the embargo to secure, for themselves, a protection of the Cuba trade monopoly. This challenges stated US national interests.¶ Camouflaged by ubiquitous anti-Castro rhetoric, the Cuban American entrepreneurs have manufactured a lucrative business with the island, regulated by the very government they pretend to hate. The rightwing congressional representatives pretend to fight for every law to punish the “Castro regime” while in practice turn a dead eye to the growing trade that helps Florida’s and Cuba’s economy. Preserve the embargo, but make an exception for Cuban Americans.¶ By recognizing the facts about this trade, the White House might become inspired to lift the embargo – a move to benefit all Americans. US government revenue would grow from opening trade and travel with Cuba. In the process we might also regain a missing piece of US sovereignty!

### Link- Unpopular with Anti-Castro Lobby

#### Anti-Castro lobby gets Congress to push back against the plan

LARRY BIRNS [COHA-Council of Hemispheric Affairs- DIRECTOR]AND FREDERICK B. MILLS[COHA SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW ]¶ [Best Time for U.S.– Cuba Rapprochement Is Now](http://www.coha.org/best-time-for-u-s-cuba-rapprochement-is-now/)¶ –JANUARY 30, 2013¶ <http://www.coha.org/best-time-for-u-s-cuba-rapprochement-is-now/>

The Obama Administration should be prepared to take, in quick progression, three important initial steps to trigger a speedy rapprochement with Cuba: immediately phase out the embargo, free the Cuban five, and remove Havana from the spurious State Department roster of nations purportedly sponsoring terrorism. These measures should be seen as indispensable if Washington is to ever mount a credible regional policy of mutual respect among nations and adjust to the increased ideological diversity and independence of the Latin American and Caribbean regions. Washington’s path towards an urgently needed rehabilitation of its hemispheric policy ought to also include consideration of Cuba’s own pressing national interests. A thaw in US—Cuba relations would enhance existing security cooperation between the countries, amplify trade and commercial ties, and guarantee new opportunities for citizens of both nations to build bridges of friendship and cooperation. For this to happen, the Obama Administration would have to muster the audacity to resist the anti-Castro lobby and their hardline allies in Congress, whose Cuba bashing has no limits. Nevertheless, it is time to replace belligerency with détente. This essay argues that the embargo against Cuba is blatantly counterproductive, immoral, and anachronistic.  If the initial purpose of this measure was to punish Havana for expropriating U.S. property and to bring about fundamental political and economic reforms, Washington has had more than 50 years to see that the status quo is flawed. Over the years, invasion, embargo, and covert psychological operations against Cuba have only served to reinforce a ‘circle the wagons’ mentality in Havana. The island also has been subject to a relentless barrage of propaganda and terrorist assaults organized by militant anti-Castro zealots to advance their cause. These attacks include the 1997 bombing of three hotels in Havana which resulted in the death of Italian tourist Fabio Di Celmo, and the deadly 1976 downing of a Cuban civilian jet. Rather than succumbing to pressure, all of these incidents have given the majority of Cuban nationals good reason to raise defensive barricades in the face of repeated threats to the survival of their homeland. Besides being counter-productive, there are also strong moral arguments for ending the embargo. From a utilitarian point of view, the policy is objectionable because it has brought about needless suffering without convincing evidence of  praiseworthy results.  One illustration of this is what happened during what Havana calls the “special period in time of peace.”  This refers to the economic crisis, hydrocarbon energy shortages, and food insecurity that followed the collapse of Soviet Bloc (1989 – 1991) which was Cuba’s main trading partner and the source of vital subsidies. The embargo took an especially harsh toll during the special period.  According to a 1997 report  Denial of Food and Medicine: The Impact of the Embargo on Health and Nutrition in Cuba by The American Association for World Health: “the U.S. embargo of Cuba has dramatically harmed the health and nutrition of large numbers of ordinary Cuban citizens.” The report also observed that “the U.S. embargo has caused a significant rise in suffering-and even deaths-in Cuba.”  The special period, including a serious food shortage in 1993, did not lead to the country’s surrender, but to the decisive restructuring of the agricultural sector, a number of economic reforms, and the diversification of trade. A more recent report by Human Rights Watch also points to the needless suffering caused by the embargo: “The United States’ economic embargo on Cuba, in place for more than half a century, continues to impose indiscriminate hardship on Cubans, and has failed to improve human rights in the country.”  (2012 Report on Cuba) The embargo, then, has harmed those whom it purportedly meant to benefit–the average Cuban. A benevolent foreign policy towards Cuba would collaterally seek to benefit the Cuban people, not bring hunger, hardship, and in some cases death to an innocent civilian population. Since it is unlikely that the majority of Cubans would willingly impose such adversity on themselves or their kith and kin for over fifty years, such a punitive and coercive measure fails another important test of moral acceptability. In addition to being counter-productive and immoral, U.S. policy towards Havana is also anachronistic. During the excesses of the cold war, the U.S. sought to use harsh and unforgiving measures to isolate Cuba from its neighbors in order to limit the influence of the Cuban revolution on a variety of insurgencies being waged in the region.  That narrative did not sufficiently recognize the homegrown causes of insurgency in the hemisphere. Some argue that it inadvertently drove Cuba further into the Soviet camp.  Ironically, at the present juncture of world history, the embargo is in some ways isolating the U.S. rather than Cuba. Washington is often viewed as implementing  a regional policy that is defenseless and without a compass. At the last Summit of the Americas in Cartagena in April 2012, member states, with the exception of Washington, made it clear that they unanimously want Cuba to participate in the next plenary meeting or the gathering will be shut down.  There are new regional organizations, such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), that now include Cuba and exclude the U.S.  Not even America’s closest allies support the embargo. Instead, over the years, leaders in NATO and the OECD member nations have visited Cuba and, in some cases, allocated lines of credit to the regime. So it was no surprise that in November of 2012, the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly (188 – 3), for the 21st year in a row, against the US embargo. Finally, while a slim majority of Cuban Americans still favor the measure, changing demographics are eroding and outdating this support. As famed Cuban Researcher, Wayne Smith, the director of the Latin America Rights & Security: Cuba Project, at the Center for International Policy, points out, “There are now many more new young Cuban Americans who support a more sensible approach to Cuba” (Washington Post, Nov. 9, 2012). Despite the basic intransigence of US policy towards Cuba, in recent years, important changes have been introduced by Havana: state control over the economy has been diminished; most travel restrictions affecting both Americans and Cubans on the island have been lifted; and the “group of 75” Cuban dissidents detained in 2003 have been freed.  Washington has all but ignored these positive changes by Havana, but when it comes to interacting with old foes such as those of Myanmar, North Korea, and Somalia, somehow constructive dialogue is the order of the day. One reason for this inconsistency is the continued opposition by the anti-Castro lobby to a change of course by Washington. The anti-Castro lobby and their allies in the US Congress argue that the reforms coming out of Havana are too little too late and that political repression continues unabated. They continue to see the embargo as a tool for coercing either more dramatic reforms or regime change. It is true that the reformist tendency in Cuba does not include a qualitative move from a one party system to political pluralism. Lamentably, Cuba reportedly continues to use temporary detentions and the occasional jailing of non-violent dissidents to limit the parameters of political debate and total freedom of association.  The authors agree that no non-violent Cuban dissident should be intimidated, detained or jailed.  But continuing to maliciously turn the screws on Havana has never provided an incentive for more democracy in any sense of the word nor has it created a political opening into which Cuba, with confidence, could enter. The easing of tensions between Washington and Havana is more likely to contribute to the evolution of a more democratic form of socialism on the island, the early stages of which we may presently be witnessing. In any casethe precise form of such change inevitably should and will be decided in Cuba, not in Washington or Miami. To further moves towards rapprochement with Cuba, the U.S. State Department should remove the country from the  list of state sponsors of terrorism. It is an invention to depict Havana as a state sponsor of terrorism, a charge only levied by the State Department under pressure from Hill hardliners. As researcher Kevin Edmunds, quite properly points out: “This position is highly problematic, as the United States has actively engaged in over 50 years of economic and covert destabilization in Cuba, going so far as blindly protecting wanted terrorists such as Luis Posada Carilles and Orlando Bosch, both former CIA agents accused of dozens of terrorist attacks in Cuba and the United States ” (Nov. 15, 2012, Kevin Edmonds blog).  It was precisely the propensity of some anti-Castro extremists to plan terrorist attacks against Cuba that urgently motivated the infiltration of such groups by the Cuban five as well as the close monitoring of these organizations by the FBI. Another gesture of good will would be for the White House to grant clemency to the Cuban five: Gerardo Hernandez, Ramón Labañino, Fernando Gonzalez, Antonio Guerrero and René Gonzalez. They are Cuban nationals who were convicted in a Miami court in 2001 and subsequently sentenced to terms ranging from 15 years to double life, mostly on charges of conspiracy to commit espionage.  Despite requests for a change of venue out of Miami, which at first was granted and later denied, the trial took place in a politically charged Miami atmosphere that arguably tainted the proceedings and compromised justice. Supporters maintain that the Cuban five had infiltrated extremist anti-Castro organizations in order to prevent terrorist attacks against Cuba and did not pose any security threat to the United States. It would be an important humanitarian gesture to let them go home. Perhaps such a gesture might facilitate reciprocity on the part of Cuban authorities when it comes to American engineer Alan Gross who is presently being detained in a Cuban jail. There would probably be a political price to pay by the Obama administration for taking steps towards reconciliation with Havana, but if Obama’s election to a second term means that there is to be a progressive dividend, surely such a dividend ought to include a change in US policy towards the island.  Mirabile dictu, the Administration can build on the small steps it has already taken. Since 2009, Washington has lifted some of the restrictions on travel between the US and Cuba and now allows Cuban Americans to send remittances to relatives on the island. The Cuba Reconciliation Act (HR 214) introduced by Representative Jose Serrano (D-NY) on January 4, 2013, and sitting in a number of congressional committees, would repeal the harsh terms of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, both of which toughened the embargo during the special period in Cuba. The Cuba Reconciliation Act, however, is unlikely to get much traction, especially with ultra-hardliner Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), chairing the House Foreign Relations Committee, and her counterpart, Robert Menendez (D-NJ), who is about to lead the Senate Foreign Relations Body. Some of the anti-Castro Cuban American community would likely view any of the three measures advocated here as a capitulation to the Castro brothers. But as we have argued, a pro-democracy and humanist position is not in any way undermined, but might in fact be advanced by détente. An end to the embargo has been long overdue, and the judgment of history may very well be that it ought never to have been started.

## Democracy Adv CP

### 1NC Shell

#### Text: The United States federal government should increase contact and dialogue with Cuba and offer substantial investment in educational, cultural and scientific exchange programs.

#### Counterplan solves the hostility and promotes democratic reform

**Thale 2012** (Geoff Thale is WOLA’s program director. Mr. Thale has studied Cuba issues since the mid-1990s, 2-13-12, “Misguided Efforts to Promote Democracy in Cuba”, <http://www.wola.org/commentary/misguided_efforts_to_promote_democracy>)

Policy makers ought to re-think what can and should sensibly be done to promote democratic reform and political opening in Cuba. Reducing the hostility between our countries and increasing contact and dialogue would be the most obvious—and least expensive—steps. If the United States wishes to continue investing in programs directed at Cuba, efforts should focus on educational, cultural, and scientific exchange programs run through the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. These programs should be de-politicized, so that they can actually support the changes that are taking place in Cuba. The few effective current activities—humanitarian support for the families of prisoners, some non-political training programs for journalists, and others—could be carried out under other U.S. government auspices and without the taint that lurks behind the existing programs. Ending or substantially altering these programs might signal to Cuba that the Obama administration welcomes Cuba’s efforts to open up its economic and political system. And in the context of such a shift, the likelihood that Alan Gross would be pardoned or paroled by Cuban authorities would increase.

## Economic Reforms CP

### 1NC Shell

**Text: The President of the United State will issue an executive order which opens U.S. markets to Cuba, authorizes the sale of American goods and services private entrepreneurs in Cuba, and authorizes United States credit card and insurance companies to provide basic financial services to United States travelers to Cuba.**

#### Economic reform measures can be taken without violating sanctions to resolve economic downturn

Goodman 2013 (Joshua Goodman, 2/20/13, Bloomberg News, Obama Can Bend Cuba Embargo to Help Open Economy, Groups Say”)

Among steps Obama can take without violating sanctions passed by Congress are opening U.S. markets, as well as authorizing the sale of American goods and services, to the estimated 400,000 private entrepreneurs that have arisen since Cuban President Raul Castro started cutting state payrolls in 2011. The reports also recommend allowing U.S. credit card and insurance companies to provide basic financial services to licensed U.S. travelers to Cuba. “We’ve been sitting on the sidelines with our hands tied by an antiquated law that’s being too strictly interpreted,” said Chris Sabatini, an author of the report and senior policy director for the Council of the Americas, a business-backed group based in New York. “There’s more Obama can do to be a catalyst for meaningful economic change.” Obama in 2009 allowed companies for the first time to provide communications services to the Caribbean island of 11 million and lifted a travel ban for Cuban-Americans. The loosening of restrictions, while heralded by the White House as a way to undermine the Castro government’s control of information, was seen as insufficient by potential investors including Verizon Communications Inc. and AT&T Inc.

### CP – Solves Democracy/Economy

#### Economic reform would benefit Cuban economy – now is a key time

Goodman 2013 (Joshua Goodman, 2/20/13, Bloomberg News, Obama Can Bend Cuba Embargo to Help Open Economy, Groups Say”)

Economic Overhaul Now, in a second term, and with private business expanding in Cuba, Obama has a freer hand to do more, said Sabatini. An exception to the embargo allowing U.S. businesses and consumers to trade with non-state enterprises in Cuba would be small in scale though help empower a growing, viable constituency for change on the island, he said. Since his brother Fidel started handing over power in 2006, Castro has relaxed state control of the economy in the biggest economic overhaul since the 1959 revolution. To provide jobs for the 1 million state workers being laid off, the government began allowing the buying and selling of homes and the creation of farming co-operatives and other private businesses. The latest sign of change are new rules that took effect in January allowing most Cubans to bypass requirements they obtain an exit visa or invitation from abroad to leave the island. Castro in December said that he hopes that productivity gains will boost economic growth this year to at least 3.7 percent. Gross domestic product expanded 3.1 percent in 2012.

## Increase Embargo CP

### 1NC Shell

#### Text: The United States federal government should substantially decrease its economic engagement toward Cuba by increasing all relevant economic and legal sanctions, penalties, and restrictions of the Cuban Embargo.

#### CP competes and solves the aff, it is the opposite action of the plan but avoids political fights from the pro embargo lobby

[DAMIEN CAVE](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/damien_cave/index.html) [foreign correspondent for The New York Times, he covers Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.¶ From 2008 to 2010 he served as the Times’ Miami bureau chief, writing on a range of topics] ¶ November 19, 2012¶ Easing of Restraints in Cuba Renews Debate on U.S. Embargo¶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/20/world/americas/changes-in-cuba-create-support-for-easing-embargo.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0>

And Cuba has a long history of tossing ice on warming relations. The latest example is the jailing of Alan Gross, a State Department contractor who has spent nearly three years behind bars for distributing satellite telephone equipment to Jewish groups in Havana.¶ In Washington, Mr. Gross is seen as the main impediment to an easing of the embargo, but there are also limits to what the president could do without Congressional action. The [1992 Cuban Democracy Act](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/cuba/democ_act_1992.html) conditioned the waiving of sanctions on the introduction of democratic changes inside Cuba. The [1996 Helms-Burton Act](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-104publ114/html/PLAW-104publ114.htm) also requires that the embargo remain until Cuba has a transitional or democratically elected government. Obama administration officials say they have not given up, and could move if the president decides to act on his own. Officials say that under the Treasury Department’s licensing and regulation-writing authority, there is room for significant modification. Following the legal logic of Mr. Obama’s changes in 2009, further expansions in travel are possible along with new allowances for investment or imports and exports, especially if narrowly applied to Cuban businesses.¶ Even these adjustments — which could also include travel for all Americans and looser rules for ships engaged in trade with Cuba, according to [a legal analysis](http://www.hoganlovells.com/files/Publication/57d34e80-51b8-4ee0-ae64-750f65ee7642/Preview/PublicationAttachment/55896b90-840a-42bf-8744-752a7a206333/Cuba%20Aritcle%20FINAL.pdf) commissioned by the Cuba Study Group — would probably mean a fierce political fight. The handful of Cuban-Americans in Congress for whom the embargo is sacred oppose looser rules.¶ When asked about Cuban entrepreneurs who are seeking more American support, Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the Florida Republican who is chairwoman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, proposed an even tighter embargo.¶ “The sanctions on the regime must remain in place and, in fact, should be strengthened, and not be altered,” she wrote in an e-mail. “Responsible nations must not buy into the facade the dictatorship is trying to create by announcing ‘reforms’ while, in reality, it’s tightening its grip on its people.”¶ Many Cubans agree that their government cares more about control than economic growth. Business owners complain that inspectors pounce when they see signs of success and demand receipts to prove that supplies were not stolen from the government, a common practice here. One restaurant owner in Havana said he received a large fine for failing to produce a receipt for plastic wrap.

### UQ/ Solvency – Now Key to Stop Regime

#### Now is the key time to ratchet up pressure on the Cuban regime- increasing the embargo collapses the regime solving the aff

[Mitchell Bustillo](http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/author/mitchell-bustillo/) [will be attending Columbia University in the fall where he will be majoring in Engineering with a minor in Economics on a Pre-Law track. He is a first-generation Cuban-American, a Hispanic Heritage Foundation Gold Medallion Winner, and a former United States Senate Page, appointed by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. He one day hopes to return to the Hill]¶ Time to Strengthen the Cuban Embargo¶ May 9, 2013¶ <http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2013/05/09/time-to-strengthen-the-cuban-embargo/>

No doubt, it has been a fruitless 50 years since the embargo was enacted. Little has changed as far as democracy and human rights are concerned. To maintain control, Cuba has “managed to offset much of the effects over the years in large part because the Soviets subsidized the island for three decades, because the regime welcomed Canadian, Mexican and European capital after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and because Venezuela is its new patron,” [according to Llosa](http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2492). However, Venezuela is now undergoing a political transition of its own with the recent death of Hugo Chávez, its president for the past 14 years, and the controversial election of Nicolás Maduro.¶ Despite being Chávez’s handpicked successor, Maduro only won by a narrow margin and will likely be forced to cut spending on social programs and foreign assistance in an effort to stabilize Venezuela’s dire economic problems. Therefore, now is the ideal time to take action. Without Venezuela’s support, the Cuban government will assuredly face an economic crisis. Strengthening the embargo to limit U.S. dollars flowing into Cuba would place further pressure on the Cuban government and has the potential to trigger an economic collapse. A change in the Cuban political climate is within reach.¶

### Solvency- Democracy

#### Embargo fails now- only increasing the embargo’s pressure solves democracy

[Mitchell Bustillo](http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/author/mitchell-bustillo/) [will be attending Columbia University in the fall where he will be majoring in Engineering with a minor in Economics on a Pre-Law track. He is a first-generation Cuban-American, a Hispanic Heritage Foundation Gold Medallion Winner, and a former United States Senate Page, appointed by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. He one day hopes to return to the Hill]¶ Time to Strengthen the Cuban Embargo¶ May 9, 2013¶ <http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2013/05/09/time-to-strengthen-the-cuban-embargo/>

When thinking of U.S.-Cuba relations, the trade embargo, or el bloqueo, is first and foremost on people’s minds. In 2009, President Barack Obama eased the travel ban, allowing Cuban-Americans to travel freely to Cuba, and again in 2011, allowing students and religious missionaries to travel to Cuba, as recently demonstrated by American pop culture figures, Beyoncé and her husband Jay-Z. Despite a history of hostile transgressions, the U.S. is inconsistent with its implementation of the embargo, which sends mixed signals to Havana and displays our weak foreign policy regarding Cuba.¶ Undoubtedly, Cuba is capitalizing on this weakness by using the embargo as a scapegoat for all of its woes without any immediate fear of reinstated restrictions. Because the goal is to promote Cuban democracy and freedom through non-violent and non-invasive means while refraining from providing any support to the current oppressive Cuban government, the current legislation regarding the embargo and travel ban against Cuba needs to be modernized and strengthened. The need for an embargo has never been more important or potentially effective, even considering the current human rights and economic arguments against the embargo.¶ Washington’s goal in its dealings with Havana is clear: facilitate the introduction and growth of democracy while increasing personal freedoms. There are many who argue that the best way to spread democracy is by lifting the embargo and travel restrictions. U.S. Rep. Michael Honda [argues](http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/95861-us-embargo-against-cuba-is-imprudent-rep-michael-honda) that an influx of politically enlightened U.S. travelers to Cuba would put Havana in a difficult place, leading to their own people calling for change. However, this is erroneous. Due to the fractured and weakened state of the embargo, over 400,000 U.S. travelers visited Cuba in 2011, making the United States the second-largest source of foreign visitors after Canada, [according to NPR’s Nick Miroff](http://www.npr.org/2012/02/06/146474813/u-s-travel-to-cuba-grows-as-restrictions-are-eased). Obviously, this influx of what has been theorized to be liberty-professing tourists has not resulted in an influx of such democratic ideals into this overwhelmingly federally controlled country.¶ One example is the case of Alan Gross, an American citizen working for USAID. He was arrested in Cuba in 2009 under the allegations of Acts against the Independence and Territorial Integrity of the State while distributing computers and technological equipment to Jewish communities in Cuba. He is currently serving the fourth of his fifteen-year conviction, is in poor health, and receiving little to no aid from the U.S., according to the [Gross Family website](http://www.bringalanhome.org/). In light of this, it is hard to believe that the U.S. would be able to protect a large number of tourists in a hostile nation, especially when they plan to ‘profess’ political freedom. This view is further promoted by the[Ladies in White](http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/04/29/3371054/ladies-in-white-leader-wants-us.html), a Cuban dissident group that supports the embargo. They fear ending it would only serve to strengthen the current dictatorial regime because the real blockade, they claim, is within Cuba. Allowing American travelers to visit Cuba does not help propel the cause of Cuban democracy; it hampers it. Still there is the idea that further increasing American tourism to this nearby Caribbean island will at least aid their impoverished citizens in some manner, but this is neither a straight-forward nor easy solution. From the annual throng of American visitors, U.S. Senator Marco Rubio [declared](http://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2011/2/icymi-under-rubio-questioning-obama-administration-admits-to-risk-of-cuba-travel) at a 2011 Western Hemisphere Subcommittee Hearing that an estimated, “$4 billion a year flow directly to the Cuban government from remittances and travel by Cuban Americans, which is perhaps the single largest source of revenue to the most repressive government in the region.”¶ These remittances are sent by Americans to help their Cuban families, not support the Cuban government. It is also a common belief that the Cuban embargo is a leading cause of poverty among the Cuban citizens and that lifting the embargo would go a long way toward improving the Cuban standard of living. However, no amount of money can increase the living standards there as long as their current regime stands. “After all, the authorities were already skimming 20 percent of the remittances from Cuban-Americans and 90 percent of the salary paid to Cubans by non-American foreign investors,” [states Alvaro Vargas Llosa](http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2492), Senior Fellow of The Center on Global Prosperity at The Independent Institute.¶ However unfortunate it may be, Cuba, in its current state, is a nation consisting only of a wealthy and powerful few and an impoverished and oppressed proletariat, who possess little to no means to escape or even improve their fate. Lifting the trade embargo will not increase the general prosperity of the Cuban people, but it will increase the prosperity of the government. Ergo, the poverty and dire situation of the Cuban people cannot be blamed on the United States or the embargo.¶ No doubt, it has been a fruitless 50 years since the embargo was enacted. Little has changed as far as democracy and human rights are concerned. To maintain control, Cuba has “managed to offset much of the effects over the years in large part because the Soviets subsidized the island for three decades, because the regime welcomed Canadian, Mexican and European capital after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and because Venezuela is its new patron,” [according to Llosa](http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2492). However, Venezuela is now undergoing a political transition of its own with the recent death of Hugo Chávez, its president for the past 14 years, and the controversial election of Nicolás Maduro.¶ Despite being Chávez’s handpicked successor, Maduro only won by a narrow margin and will likely be forced to cut spending on social programs and foreign assistance in an effort to stabilize Venezuela’s dire economic problems. Therefore, now is the ideal time to take action. Without Venezuela’s support, the Cuban government will assuredly face an economic crisis. Strengthening the embargo to limit U.S. dollars flowing into Cuba would place further pressure on the Cuban government and has the potential to trigger an economic collapse. A change in the Cuban political climate is within reach.¶ According to U.S. [Senator Robert Menendez](http://www.menendez.senate.gov/newsroom/press/menendez-remarks-on-the-senate-floor-against-lifting-of-cuba-travel-restrictions), “Tourism to Cuba is a natural resource, akin to providing refined petroleum products to Iran. It’s reported that 2.5 million tourists visit Cuba – 1.5 million from North America…1 million Canadians…More than 170,000 from England…More than 400,000 from Spain, Italy, Germany, and France combined – All bringing in $1.9 billion in revenue to the Castro regime.” This behavior undermines the embargo, which is why the U.S. should urge other nations to adopt similar policies toward Cuba. A strong and unyielding embargo, supported by the U.S. and its allies, is necessary to incite political change. Furthermore, [Sen. Menendez argues](http://www.menendez.senate.gov/newsroom/press/menendez-remarks-on-the-senate-floor-against-lifting-of-cuba-travel-restrictions), “Those who lament our dependence on foreign oil because it enriches regimes in terrorist states like Iran, should not have a double standard when it comes to enriching a brutal dictatorship like Cuba right here in our own backyard.”¶ If the policy of the U.S. is to challenge these behaviors, then it must also stand up to Cuba. It would be a disservice to squander the progress of the past 50 years when opportunity is looming.